TARBELL'S TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

FOR 1931

Central BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

ERROL O. SHOUR

OCT 9 1935

By Permission of F. E. Geisler, N. Y. *Anna Coleman Ladd*

JESUS IN HIS YOUNG MANHOOD BEFORE HIS MINISTRY

TARBELL'S

TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE
INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS
IMPROVED UNIFORM COURSE
FOR 1931

TWENTY-SIXTH ANNUAL VOLUME

MARTHA TARBELL, Ph.D.

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
List of Full Page Illustrations and Map	4
List of Lessons	5-6
List of Home Daily Bible Readings	7-11
Introduction	13-22
Suggestions to Teachers	13-21
Why the Church School?	13
What Are the Objectives of the Church School?	14
Is There an Age Limit for Church School Teachers?	14
Should All Untrained Church School Teachers Resign?	15
Certain Characteristics Which Should Debar One from Teaching	16
A Few Lessons from the Master Teacher	16
He Was a Profound Psychologist	17
He Was Friend and Counselor	17
He Used Object Lessons	17
He Often Taught by Parables	17
He Made Use of Repetition	18
His Words Were Provocative of Thought	18
He Taught with Patience	19
He Taught with Faith	19
Our First Half Year's Course	19
Our Second Half Year's Course	19
The Gospel According to Luke	20
The Acts	21
Lessons for 1931	23-432
First Quarter	23-124
Second Quarter	125-231
Third Quarter	232-337
Fourth Quarter	338-432

37572

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

In Full Page Reproductions

Jesus in His Young Manhood. Anna Coleman Ladd . . . . *Frontispiece*
The Good Samaritan. Siemenroth . . . . . *Facing* 100
The Miser. Eugène Burnand . . . . . *Facing* 116
Lazarus and the Dogs. Eugène Burnand . . . . . *Facing* 150
The Pharisee and the Publican at Prayer. Eugène Burnand . . *Facing* 158
Temperance. Burne-Jones . . . . . *Facing* 222
Head of Paul. Raphael . . . . . *Facing* 278
Paul the Aged. Rembrandt . . . . . *Facing* 400

LARGE MAPS

Palestine in the Time of Christ . . . . . *Facing* 13
The Roman World in the Time of Paul . . . . . *Facing* 232

LESSONS FOR 1931

FIRST QUARTER

FIRST HALF OF A SIX MONTHS' COURSE

Jesus the World's Savior Studies in Luke

Lesson				Page
I.	Jan.	4	The Birth of John the Baptist....Luke 1	23
II.	Jan.	11	The Childhood of Jesus .....Luke 2	31
III.	Jan.	18	The Ministry of John the Baptist.Luke 3	40
IV.	Jan.	25	Jesus Tempted .....Luke 3.21 to 4.30.....	49
V.	Feb.	1	Jesus the Great Physician .....Luke 4.31 to 5.39	58
VI.	Feb.	8	Jesus the World's Teacher .....Luke 6	66
VII.	Feb.	15	Jesus the Friend of Sinners .....Luke 7	76
VIII.	Feb.	22	Jesus Bearing the Good Tidings...Luke 8	84
IX.	Mar.	1	Jesus Sending Forth Missionaries.Luke 9.1 to 10.24.....	92
X.	Mar.	8	The Good Samaritan .....Luke 10.25-37	100
XI.	Mar.	15	Jesus among Friends and Foes....Luke 10.38 to 11.54.....	108
XII.	Mar.	22	The Use and Abuse of God's Gifts (Temperance Lesson) .....Luke 12	115
XIII.	Mar.	29	Review: Jesus the World's Savior: Preparation and Popularity	123

SECOND QUARTER

SECOND HALF OF A SIX MONTHS' COURSE

Jesus the World's Savior Studies in Luke

I.	Apr.	5	Jesus Teaches Humility .....Luke 13.1 to 14.35; 18. 15-17	125
		Or,	Easter Lesson: The Resurrection..1 Corinthians 15.1-8, 50-58	133
II.	Apr.	12	The Prodigal Son .....Luke 15	141
III.	Apr.	19	The Rich Man and Lazarus .....Luke 16.1 to 17.37	150
IV.	Apr.	26	How to Pray .....Luke 18	158
V.	May	3	Jesus in the Home of Zacchæus..Luke 19.1-10	167
VI.	May	10	The Parable of the Pounds.....Luke 19.11-26	174
VII.	May	17	Jesus Enters Jerusalem as King...Luke 19.28 to 20.47....	182
VIII.	May	24	Jesus Preparing for the End.....Luke 21.1 to 22.23.....	189
IX.	May	31	Jesus in Gethsemane .....Luke 22.24-71	197
X.	June	7	Jesus Crucified .....Luke 23	205
XI.	June	14	The Resurrection and the Ascension .....Luke 24	213
XII.	June	21	The Sin of Causing Others to Stumble (Temperance Lesson).Romans 14.13-23	222
XIII.	June	28	Review: Jesus the World's Savior: Suffering and Sovereignty.....	230

THIRD QUARTER

FIRST HALF OF A SIX MONTHS' COURSE

The Spread of Christianity Studies in Acts, the Epistles and Revelation

Lesson				Page
I.	July	5	The Gift of the Holy Spirit.....Acts 1.6-14; 2.1-47.....	232
II.	July	12	The Preaching of the Apostles....Acts 3.1 to 4.31; 1 Corinthians 1.21-25	242
III.	July	19	Social Service in the Early ChurchActs 4.32-35; 6.1-7; 9. 36-39; 2 Corinthians 9.1-15	251
IV.	July	26	Christianity Spread by PersecutionActs 7.54 to 8.4; 11.19-21; 26.9-11; 1 Peter 4.12-19	260
V.	Aug.	2	Philip's Missionary Labors.....Acts 8.5-40	269
VI.	Aug.	9	Saul Converted and CommissionedActs 9.1-31; 22.3-21; Galatians 1.11-17; 1 Timothy 1.12-17	277
VII.	Aug.	16	Sowing and Reaping (Temperance Lesson) .....Galatians 6.1-10	286
VIII.	Aug.	23	A Gospel for All Men.....Acts 10.1 to 11.18; 1 Corinthians 1.23-25..	294
IX.	Aug.	30	The Mission to Cyprus.....Acts 12.25 to 13.12.....	303
X.	Sept.	6	Turning to the Gentiles.....Acts 13.13-52; Romans 1.14-16; 11.1-24	311
XI.	Sept.	13	Some Missionary Experiences.....Acts 14; Ephesians 6. 10-20	320
XII.	Sept.	20	The Council in Jerusalem.....Acts 15.1-35; Galatians 2	328
XIII.	Sept.	27	Review: The Spread of Christianity in Asia	336

FOURTH QUARTER

SECOND HALF OF A SIX MONTHS' COURSE

The Spread of Christianity Studies in Acts, the Epistles and Revelation

I.	Oct.	4	The Macedonian Call .....Acts 15.36 to 16.15; Romans 15.18-21	338
II.	Oct.	11	Paul in Philippi .....Acts 16.16-40; Philippians 4.4-9	346
III.	Oct.	18	Paul in Thessalonica and Berœa..Acts 17.1-15; 1 Thessalonians 2.1-12	354
IV.	Oct.	25	Paul in Corinth .....Acts 18.1-17; 1 Corinthians 13	362
V.	Nov.	1	World's Temperance Sunday.....Galatians 5.13-26; Romans 13.1-14	369
VI.	Nov.	8	Paul in Ephesus .....Acts 19; Ephesians 5. 5-11	377
VII.	Nov.	15	Paul in Jerusalem .....Acts 21.17 to 23.30.....	385
VIII.	Nov.	22	Paul in Rome .....Acts 25.1-12; 28.16-31..	393
IX.	Nov.	29	Paul's Letter to Philemon.....Philemon	400
X.	Dec.	6	Rome and Beyond .....Romans 15.22-29; 2 Timothy 4.6-18; Titus 1.5-16; 3.11-14	407
XI.	Dec.	13	John's Vision on Patmos.....Revelation 1.1 to 3.22..	415
XII.	Dec.	20	The Supreme Gift of Love (Christmas Lesson) .....1 John 4.7-19	423
XIII.	Dec.	27	Review: The Spread of Christianity in Europe	431

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

PREPARED BY THE INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON COMMITTEE

FIRST QUARTER

I. Dec. 29. Mal. 3.1-6. Jehovah's Messenger.
Dec. 30. Luke 1.8-22. The Parentage of John the Baptist.
Dec. 31. Luke 1.57-66. The Birth of John the Baptist.
Jan. 1. Mt. 3.1-12. John's Testimony Concerning Himself.
Jan. 2. Mt. 11.7-14. Jesus' Testimony Concerning John.
Jan. 3. John 1.29-34. John's Testimony Concerning Jesus.
Jan. 4. Luke 1.67-79. The Benedictus.

II. Jan. 5. Luke 2.1-7. The Birth of Jesus.
Jan. 6. Luke 2.8-20. The Visit of the Shepherds.
Jan. 7. Luke 2.22-32. The Presentation at Jerusalem.
Jan. 8. Mt. 2.1-12. The Visit of the Wise Men.
Jan. 9. Mt. 2.13-23. The Sojourn in Egypt.
Jan. 10. Luke 2.40-52. The Boy Jesus.
Jan. 11. Isa. 11.1-9. The Beneficent Rule of Christ.

III. Jan. 12. Luke 3.1-6. John's Call to Repentance.
Jan. 13. Luke 3.7-14. Fruits Worthy of Repentance.
Jan. 14. Luke 3.15-20. The Humility of John.
Jan. 15. Mt. 3.13-17. The Baptism of Jesus.
Jan. 16. John 1.35-42. Effective Testimony.
Jan. 17. John 3.22-30. Final Testimony Concerning Christ.
Jan. 18. Isa. 40.3-11. The Forerunner of Christ.

IV. Jan. 19. Luke 4.1-13. Jesus Tempted.
Jan. 20. Deut. 6.10-19. Tempting God.
Jan. 21. Deut. 8.1-10. Not by Bread Only.
Jan. 22. Psalms 91.9-16. Angel Guardians.
Jan. 23. James 1.12-18. Enduring Temptation.
Jan. 24. Heb. 2.13-18. Able to Succor.
Jan. 25. Rom. 8.31-39. Conquerors Through Christ.

V. Jan. 26. Luke 4.31-37. Power over Unclean Spirits.
Jan. 27. Luke 4.38-44. Healing the Sick.
Jan. 28. Luke 5.12-16. Cleansing the Leper.
Jan. 29. Luke 8.49-56. Raising the Dead.
Jan. 30. Mark 2.1-12. Physician of Souls.
Jan. 31. Mt. 9.35-10:1. A Healing Ministry.
Feb. 1. Isa. 53.1-6. The Price of Redemption.

VI. Feb. 2. Luke 6.20-26. The Poor and the Rich.
Feb. 3. Luke 6.27-38. How to Treat One's Enemies.
Feb. 4. Mt. 6.5-15. How to Pray.
Feb. 5. Luke 12.22-31. The Primacy of the Kingdom.
Feb. 6. Mt. 12.9-14. The Worth of a Man.
Feb. 7. Luke 20.19-26. A Two-Fold Loyalty.
Feb. 8. Prov. 3.13-18. The Worth of Wisdom.

VII. Feb. 9. Luke 7.36-50. Jesus the Friend of Sinners.
Feb. 10. Mark 2.13-17. Hope for Sinners.
Feb. 11. John 8.1-11. A Sinful Woman Forgiven.
Feb. 12. Luke 15.1-10. Joy over the Penitent Sinner.
Feb. 13. Psalm 130.1-8. Jehovah Forgives the Sinner.
Feb. 14. Luke 18.9-14. A Penitent's Prayer.
Feb. 15. Rom. 5.1-8. Christ Died for Sinners.

VIII. Feb. 16. Luke 8.1-15. Jesus Bearing Good Tidings.
Feb. 17. Luke 7.18-23. Good Tidings to the Poor.
Feb. 18. Isa. 35.3-10. Good Tidings Concerning the Kingdom.
Feb. 19. Acts 8.1-8. Good Tidings Proclaimed.
Feb. 20. Acts 10.34-43. Good Tidings for All Nations.
Feb. 21. John 14.1-10. Good Tidings for the Bereaved.
Feb. 22. Isa. 61.1-11. Good Tidings for the Meek.

IX. Feb. 23. Luke 9.1-6. The Twelve Sent Forth.
Feb. 24. Luke 10.1-11. The Seventy Sent Forth.
Feb. 25. Luke 10.17-24. Experiences of the Early Missionaries.
Feb. 26. Luke 24.44-49. Elements Vital to Christian Missions.
Feb. 27. Acts 8.26-38. Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch.
Feb. 28. 1 Thess. 2.1-9. Entrusted with the Gospel.
Mar. 1. Rom. 10.8-15. The Missionary and His Message.

X. Mar. 2. Luke 10.25-37. A Good Neighbor.
Mar. 3. John 4.1-9. Racial Antipathies.
Mar. 4. Acts 10.23-33. Racial Prejudices Overcome.
Mar. 5. James 2.1-9. No Respecter of Persons.
Mar. 6. Lev. 19.9-18. Duties to Neighbors.
Mar. 7. Mark 12.28-34. The Command to Love.
Mar. 8. Mt. 5.38-48. The Supremacy of Love.

XI. Mar. 9. Luke 10.38-42. Jesus Among Friends.
Mar. 10. Luke 11.42-54. Jesus Among Foes.
Mar. 11. John 7.1-9. Misunderstood by His Brethren.
Mar. 12. Mt. 10.34-39. Christ and Human Relationships.
Mar. 13. Mt. 10.16-23. Christian Behavior Under Persecution.
Mar. 14. Rom. 8.31-39. Victory Through Christ.
Mar. 15. Psalm 86.1-7. Comfort in Time of Trouble.

XII. Mar. 16. Luke 12.16-21. A Foolish Man.
Mar. 17. Luke 12.41-48. The Use and Abuse of God's Gifts.
Mar. 18. Luke 20.9-16. Stewardship Unavoidable.
Mar. 19. 1 Cor. 6.12-20. "Ye Are Not Your Own."
Mar. 20. 2 Cor. 6.14-18. Clean Living Enjoined.
Mar. 21. Rom. 6.12-18. Servants of Righteousness.
Mar. 22. Mt. 6.19-24. Treasures in Heaven.

XIII. Mar. 23. Luke 2.1-7. The Birth of Jesus.
Mar. 24. John 3.22-30. John's Testimony Concerning Jesus.
Mar. 25. Mt. 9.10-13. Physician of Souls.
Mar. 26. Luke 20.19-26. A Two-Fold Loyalty.
Mar. 27. Acts 10.34-43. Good Tidings for All Nations.
Mar. 28. Mark 2.13-17. Hope for Sinners.
Mar. 29. Isa. 35.5-10. Good Tidings Concerning the Kingdom.

SECOND QUARTER

I. Mar. 30. Luke 14.7-14. Jesus Teaches Humility.
Mar. 31. Luke 18.15-17. The Childlike Spirit.
Apr. 1. Lev. 16.29-31. The Divine Command.
Apr. 2. 2 Cor. 12.5-13. Paul's Humility.
Apr. 3. Luke 22.24-30. The Disciples' Weakness.
Apr. 4. John 13.1-11. Washing the Disciples' Feet.
Apr. 5. Phil. 2.1-11. Christ Our Example.

Or

Mar. 30. 1 Cor. 15.1-8. Christ's Resurrection.
Mar. 31. 1 Cor. 15.50-58. Victory over Death.
Apr. 1. John 1.1-5. Life in Christ.
Apr. 2. 1 John 5.1-12. The Gift of Life.
Apr. 3. John 19.23-30. The Supreme Sacrifice.
Apr. 4. John 10.9-18. The Abundant Life.
Apr. 5. Col. 3.1-11. Quickened with Christ.

II. Apr. 6. Luke 15.11-24. The Prodigal Son.
Apr. 7. Ezek. 18.21-32. Repent and Live.
Apr. 8. 2 Chron. 32.20-26. Hezekiah's Repentance.
Apr. 9. 2 Kings 22.11-20. Josiah's Repentance.
Apr. 10. Jonah 3.5-10. Nineveh's Repentance.
Apr. 11. Luke 22.54-62. Peter's Repentance.
Apr. 12. Isa. 55.1-11. Isaiah's Call to Repentance.

III. Apr. 13. Luke 16.19-31. The Rich Man and Lazarus.
Apr. 14. Amos 6.1-8. Careless Ease.
Apr. 15. Mt. 21.41-46. A Tragic End.
Apr. 16. Mt. 25.24-30. Buried Talents.
Apr. 17. Mark 10.23-31. Leaving All.
Apr. 18. Mt. 6.16-23. Treasure in Heaven.
Apr. 19. 1 John 3.13-18. Brotherly Love.

IV. Apr. 20. Luke 18.9-12. The Pharisee's Prayer.
Apr. 21. Luke 18.13-17. The Publican's Prayer.
Apr. 22. Mt. 6.9-13. The Model Prayer.
Apr. 23. 2 Kings 19.14-19. Hezekiah's Prayer.
Apr. 24. Mt. 14.23-33. Peter's Prayer.
Apr. 25. Eph. 3.14-21. Paul's Prayer.
Apr. 26. Psalm 61. David's Prayer.

V. Apr. 27. Luke 19.1-10. Jesus in the Home of Zacchaeus.
Apr. 28. Luke 5.27-32. The Call of Matthew.
Apr. 29. John 10.1-10. Jesus the Door.
Apr. 30. John 10.11-18. Jesus the Good Shepherd.
May 1. John 6.48-58. Jesus the Bread of Life.
May 2. John 8.12-20. Jesus the Light of the World.
May 3. Psalm 103.1-10. The Mercy of Jehovah.

VI. May 4. Luke 19.11-27. The Parable of the Pounds.
May 5. Mt. 25.14-21. The Parable of the Talents.
May 6. Mt. 21.33-43. Unfaithful and Foolish Stewards.
May 7. Luke 12.41-48. Faithful and Wise Stewards.
May 8. Rom. 12.1-8. The Right Use of Gifts.
May 9. 2 Tim. 4.1-8. Reward of Faithfulness.
May 10. Psalm 103.11-18. The Goodness of Jehovah.

VII. May 11. Luke 19.28-40. The Triumphal Entry.
May 12. Luke 19.41-48. Weeping over Jerusalem.
May 13. Mark 11.1-11. Returning to Bethany.
May 14. John 12.12-19. "The World Has Gone After Him."
May 15. John 2.13-17. Zeal for His House.
May 16. Psalm 8.1-9. "Out of the Mouth of Babes."
May 17. Psalm 24.1-10. The King of Glory.

VIII. May 18. Ex. 12.21-28. The First Passover.
May 19. Luke 22.7-13. Preparing for the Passover.
May 20. Luke 22.14-23. The Lord's Supper.
May 21. 1 Cor. 11.23-29. Our Authority for the Feast.
May 22. John 6.31-40. Life-Giving Bread.
May 23. 1 Cor. 10.14-22. The Cup of Blessing.
May 24. Isa. 53.1-6. The Great Sacrifice.

IX. May 25. Luke 22.39-54. Jesus in Gethsemane.
May 26. Mark 14.32-42. The Man of Sorrows.
May 27. Heb. 5.1-10. Prayers and Tears.
May 28. Luke 9.28-36. Prayer and Glory.
May 29. Heb. 2.10-18. Perfect Through Suffering.
May 30. Heb. 10.1-10. The Will of God.
May 31. Psalm 130.1-6. Waiting on God.

X. June 1. Luke 23.33-46. Jesus Crucified.
June 2. Rom. 5.1-8. Dying for the Ungodly.
June 3. John 12.23-32. Christ's Death Necessary.
June 4. John 19.23-30. On the Cross.
June 5. 1 Cor. 1.17-25. The Message of the Cross.
June 6. Heb. 9.13-22. The Crowning Sacrifice.
June 7. Isa. 53.7-12. An Offering for Sin.

XI. June 8. Luke 24.36-48. The Resurrection.
June 9. Luke 24.49-53. The Ascension.
June 10. Mt. 12.38-45. The Resurrection Foretold.
June 11. Mt. 28.1-10. The Empty Tomb.
June 12. Acts 1.6-11. The Ascension Scene.
June 13. Acts 13.29-37. Paul's Testimony.
June 14. 1 Cor. 15.50-58. The Supreme Victory.

XII. June 15. Rom. 14.13-23. The Sin of Causing Others to Stumble.
June 16. Mt. 18.1-10. Stumbling Blocks.
June 17. Mark 7.8-13. Sinful Traditions.
June 18. Mt. 19.13-15. Jesus' Love for Children.
June 19. 1 Kings 2.1-4. David's Counsel to Solomon.
June 20. Prov. 3.1-10. Solomon's Wise Counsel.
June 21. 1 John 4.7-13. Love for Others.

XIII. June 22. John 3.14-17. The Love of God.
June 23. Luke 19.28-38. The Triumphal Entry.
June 24. Luke 22.15-20. The Lord's Supper.
June 25. Luke 22.39-54. The Agony in the Garden.
June 26. Luke 23.33-46. The Crucifixion.
June 27. Luke 24.36-48. The Resurrection.
June 28. Luke 24.49-53. The Ascension.

THIRD QUARTER

I. June 29. Acts 1.1-11. The Promise of the Spirit.
June 30. Acts 2.22-33. Peter's Testimony.
July 1. John 14.15-26. The Comforter.
July 2. Rom. 8.1-11. The Spirit of Life.
July 3. Psalm 139.1-10. The Omnipresent Spirit.
July 4. Gal. 5.16-26. Fruit of the Spirit.
July 5. John 16.7-14. The Office of the Spirit.

II. July 6. Acts 3.11-16. In the Name of Jesus.
July 7. Acts 4.5-14. The Boldness of Peter and John.
July 8. Eph. 6.10-20. Boldness in Preaching.
July 9. Dan. 3.13-23. Boldness by Faith.
July 10. Acts 22.1-10. Paul's Courageous Preaching.
July 11. Rom. 1.8-17. Not Ashamed.
July 12. Rom. 10.5-15. The Power of the Gospel.

III. July 13. Acts 6.1-7. A Shared Service.
July 14. 2 Cor. 9.1-11. A Cheerful Service.
July 15. Luke 10.1-9. A United Service.
July 16. Phil. 4.1-7. Fellow Workers.
July 17. Ex. 18.13-27. Division of Labor.
July 18. Isa. 41.8-16. The Divine Helper.
July 19. Psalm 112.5-10. Generosity Rewarded.

IV. July 20. Acts 7.54—8.1a. Stephen's Martyrdom.
July 21. 1 Peter 4.12-19. Rejoicing in Suffering.
July 22. Heb. 11.17-31. Triumphs of Faith.
July 23. Gen. 45.1-8. Joseph in Egypt.
July 24. Dan. 6.19-28. Daniel in Babylon.
July 25. Mt. 10.34-42. Price of Discipleship.
July 26. 1 Peter 1.3-9. Reward of Faithful Witnessing.

V. July 27. Acts 8.26-40. The Ethiopian Converted.
July 28. Jonah 1.1-10. A Disobedient Messenger.
July 29. Isa. 19.18-25. Foreigners Converted.
July 30. Eph. 2.11-22. Gentiles Become Fellow Citizens.
July 31. Acts 17.1-11. Opening the Scriptures.
Aug. 1. 1 Cor. 1.18-25. The Word of Power.
Aug. 2. Mt. 13.1-9. Sowing the Seed.

VI. Aug. 3. Acts 9.1-9. The Conversion of Saul.
Aug. 4. Acts 9.23-31. The Hatred of the Jews.
Aug. 5. 1 Tim. 1.12-17. Called to Be an Apostle.
Aug. 6. Gal. 1.11-17. Source of Paul's Gospel.
Aug. 7. 2 Cor. 5.11-19. A New Creature.
Aug. 8. Phil. 3.1-12. Surrendering All.
Aug. 9. Isa. 6.1-8. Isaiah's Vision.

VII. Aug. 10. Gal. 6.1-10. Sowing and Reaping.
Aug. 11. Prov. 23.15-23. Timely Admonitions.
Aug. 12. Mt. 13.24-30. Sowing Tares.
Aug. 13. Titus 2.1-8. Temperate Living.
Aug. 14. Rom. 14.13-23. Social Responsibility.
Aug. 15. Rom. 2.1-11. Life's Harvest.
Aug. 16. Isa. 5.11-15. Woes of the Wicked.

VIII. Aug. 17. Acts 11.5-18. A Gospel for All Men.
Aug. 18. Acts 10.9-16. Peter's Vision.
Aug. 19. Acts 10.24-33. The Responsive Heart.
Aug. 20. Acts 10.34-48. Gentiles Received.
Aug. 21. Psalm 72.1-10. The Universal Kingdom.
Aug. 22. Rom. 10.11-21. Salvation for All.
Aug. 23. Isa. 11.1-5. The Righteous Judge.

IX. Aug. 24. Acts 11.19-30. Missionaries of Antioch.
Aug. 25. Acts 13.1-12. The Mission to Cyprus.
Aug. 26. Mt. 28.16-20. The Apostolic Commission.
Aug. 27. 2 Kings 17.24-29. The Mission to Samaria.
Aug. 28. Jonah 3.1-10. The Mission to Nineveh.
Aug. 29. Ezek. 2.1-7. The Mission to the Rebellious.
Aug. 30. Isa. 42.6-10. Jehovah's Promise.

X. Aug. 31. Acts 13.13-24. The Saviour of Israel.
Sept. 1. Acts 13.25-39. Good Tidings.
Sept. 2. Acts 13.40-52. Turning to the Gentiles.
Sept. 3. Isa. 55.1-7. The Universal Call.
Sept. 4. Luke 4.14-22. The Gospel of Liberty.
Sept. 5. John 17.18-26. Prayer for Unity.
Sept. 6. Psalm 72.6-13. Reign of the Righteous King.

XI. Sept. 7. Acts 14.1-7. Persecution for the Gospel's Sake.
Sept. 8. Acts 14.8-18. The Cripple at Lystra.
Sept. 9. Acts 14.19-28. Perseverance in the Gospel.
Sept. 10. 1 Kings 19.9-18. Help for the Discouraged.
Sept. 11. Eph. 6.10-20. The Missionary's Equipment.
Sept. 12. 2 Cor. 1.3-11. Rejoicing in Affliction.
Sept. 13. Isa. 50.4-9. Jehovah Our Helper.

XII. Sept. 14. Acts 15.1-11. The Council at Jerusalem.
Sept. 15. Acts 15.12-21. Decision of the Council.
Sept. 16. Acts 15.22-35. Decrees of the Council.
Sept. 17. Gal. 2.11-21. Righteousness by Faith.
Sept. 18. Col. 3.5-17. Complete in Christ.
Sept. 19. 1 Thess. 1.1-10. Turning from Idols.
Sept. 20. Rom. 8.1-10. Freedom in Christ.

XIII. Sept. 21. Acts 9.10-19. The Missionary to Asia.
Sept. 22. Acts 11.5-18. The Gospel for All.
Sept. 23. Mt. 28.16-20. The Apostolic Commission.
Sept. 24. Acts 13.40-52. Turning to the Gentiles.
Sept. 25. Acts 14.19-28. Perseverance in the Gospel.
Sept. 26. Rom. 10.5-15. The Power of the Gospel.
Sept. 27. Mt. 13.31-33. The Growth of the Kingdom.

FOURTH QUARTER

I. Sept. 28. Acts 16.6-15. The Macedonian Call.
Sept. 29. Jonah 1.1-3; 3.1-4. Jonah's Call.
Sept. 30. Isa. 6.1-10. Isaiah's Call.
Oct. 1. Ezek. 2.1-7. Ezekiel's Call.
Oct. 2. Mark 6.7-13. The Disciples Commissioned.
Oct. 3. Acts 1.6-11. World Evangelism.
Oct. 4. Heb. 11.8-10. Abraham's Call.

II. Oct. 5. Acts 16.16-24. A Demon Cast Out.
Oct. 6. Acts 16.25-34. A Prison Experience.
Oct. 7. Luke 4.31-37. Jesus Dealing with Evil Spirits.
Oct. 8. Acts 12.1-12. Peter's Deliverance from Prison.
Oct. 9. Acts 22.22-29. Paul's Citizenship Advantages.
Oct. 10. Phil. 1.1-11. Paul's Love for the Philippians.
Oct. 11. Rom. 8.35-39. The Believer's Security.

III. Oct. 12. Acts 17.1-11. Paul in Thessalonica and Berea.
Oct. 13. 1 Thess. 2.1-12. The Spirit of Paul's Ministry.
Oct. 14. Eph. 3.8-13. The Burden of Paul's Preaching.
Oct. 15. 1 Thess. 3.1-10. Paul Comforted by Converts.
Oct. 16. Neh. 8.1-8. Studying the Word.
Oct. 17. James 1.19-27. Doers of the Word.
Oct. 18. Psalm 119.9-16. Cleansing Power of the Word.

IV. Oct. 19. Acts 17.22-32. Paul in Athens.
Oct. 20. Acts 18.1-11. Paul in Corinth.
Oct. 21. 1 Cor. 1.18-25. Paul's Estimate of Preaching.
Oct. 22. 1 Cor. 2.1-10. Paul's Manner of Preaching.

	Oct. 23.	1 Cor. 3.1-11. Damaging Divisions.
	Oct. 24.	1 Cor. 8.4-13. Guarding Others' Consciences.
	Oct. 25.	1 Cor. 13.1-8. Love, the Greatest Grace.
V.	Oct. 26.	Gal. 5.13-26. Denying the Flesh.
	Oct. 27.	Rom. 13.1-10. Law Observance.
	Oct. 28.	1 Cor. 9.24-27. Disciplining the Body.
	Oct. 29.	Col. 3.1-11. Putting on the New Man.
	Oct. 30.	1 Peter 3.8-13. Following the Good.
	Oct. 31.	1 Peter 4.12-19. Suffering for the Right.
	Nov. 1.	Rom. 14.13-21. Walking Charitably.
VI.	Nov. 2.	Acts 18.24-28. Apollos at Ephesus.
	Nov. 3.	Acts 19.1-7. Paul Begins at Ephesus.
	Nov. 4.	Acts 19.8-17. Pretenders Roughly Handled.
	Nov. 5.	Acts 19.18-20. A Reading Reformation.
	Nov. 6.	Acts 19.23-34. The Ephesian Mob.
	Nov. 7.	Eph. 5.5-14. Forsaking Idolatry.
	Nov. 8.	2 Cor. 1.3-11. Paul's Deliverance from Death.
VII.	Nov. 9.	Acts 20.22-35. Farewell to the Ephesians.
	Nov. 10.	Acts 21.7-14. Warnings of Danger.
	Nov. 11.	Acts 21.17-26. Reception in Jerusalem.
	Nov. 12.	Acts 21.27-36. Experience with a Mob.
	Nov. 13.	Acts 22.5-15. Paul's Conversion Retold.
	Nov. 14.	Acts 23.12-24. Escape from Jerusalem.
	Nov. 15.	2 Cor. 4.7-15. Hope in Tribulations.
VIII.	Nov. 16.	Acts 24.22-27. A Prisoner in Caesarea.
	Nov. 17.	Acts 25.1-12. The Appeal to Caesar.
	Nov. 18.	Acts 27.14-27. A Storm at Sea.
	Nov. 19.	Acts 28.1-10. Paul in Melita.
	Nov. 20.	Acts 28.16-24. Paul in Rome.
	Nov. 21.	Rom. 10.5-15. Salvation Through Faith.
	Nov. 22.	Isa. 2.2-4. Final Triumph of the Gospel.
IX.	Nov. 23	Phil. 1-7. Character of Philemon.
	Nov. 24.	Phil. 8-20. A Plea for a Slave.
	Nov. 25.	Mt. 5.21-26. The Method of Reconciliation.
	Nov. 26.	Psalm 133. The Beauty of Brotherhood.
	Nov. 27.	1 Peter 3.8-16. Courtesy Enjoined.
	Nov. 28.	Eph. 6.5-9. Masters and Servants.
	Nov. 29.	1 John 4.7-13. The Life of Love.
X.	Nov. 30.	Rom. 15.22-29. Paul's Desire to See Rome.
	Dec. 1.	Col. 1.9-20. The Pre-eminence of Christ.
	Dec. 2.	Col. 1.24-29. Paul's Attitude Toward Sufferings.
	Dec. 3.	1 Tim. 6.11-20. Timely Admonitions.
	Dec. 4.	2 Tim. 4.9-18. Paul Summons His Friends.
	Dec. 5.	2 Tim. 4.1-8. Paul's Parting Counsel.
	Dec. 6.	Phil. 3.7-14. Striving for the Best.
XI.	Dec. 7.	John 1.29-40. John's Introduction to Jesus.
	Dec. 8.	John 19.23-30. John Witnesses the Crucifixion.
	Dec. 9.	John 20.1-10. John Believes the Resurrection.
	Dec. 10.	Rev. 1.9-18. The Glorious, Living Christ.
	Dec. 11.	Rev. 2.1-7. Christ's Message to the Church.
	Dec. 12.	Rev. 3.14-22. Christ's Present Attitude.
	Dec. 13.	1 Cor. 15.42-49. The Glory of Immortality.
XII.	Dec. 14.	Isa. 9.1-7. A Prophecy of Christ.
	Dec. 15.	Luke 2.1-14. The Birth of Jesus.
	Dec. 16.	1 John 4.7-17. The Proof of God's Love.
	Dec. 17.	John 6.48-59. The Bread of Life.
	Dec. 18.	John 10.7-18. The Good Shepherd.
	Dec. 19.	Rom. 5.1-11. The Supreme Act of Love.
	Dec. 20.	John 15.12-17. The Love Relationship.
XIII.	Dec. 21.	Acts 16.6-15. Paul's Entrance into Europe.
	Dec. 22.	Acts 22.22-29. Paul's Citizenship Advantages.
	Dec. 23.	1 Thess. 2.1-12. The Spirit of Paul's Ministry.
	Dec. 24.	1 Cor. 2.1-10. Paul's Manner of Preaching.
	Dec. 25.	Acts 19.18-20. A Reading Reformation.
	Dec. 26.	Acts 20.22-35. Farewell to the Ephesians.
	Dec. 27.	Isa. 11.1-10. The Righteous Kingdom Set Up.

RED LINES INDICATE THE EXTENT OF THE PROVINCES

TARBELL'S TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

IMPROVED UNIFORM COURSE FOR 1931

INTRODUCTION

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

Why the Church School? Modern education has made great advance in recent years. "British education thirty years ago was a jungle; now it is a park," is the way in which an educator refers to the remarkable change that has been wrought in Great Britain. That this secular park is all-inclusive some people are practically affirming and yet others are tacitly assuming. To them the church school is an agency that has outlived its usefulness.

Secular education may include moral education, and may be a great force in the development of character, but it does not include Christian education. Among several statements in the International Journal of Religious Education concerning the distinction between character education and Christian education are the following:

Character education trains human beings in the art of behaving decently toward one another; Christian education trains human beings also in the art of behaving rightly toward the Divine Being.

Character education is interested chiefly in "the good life"; Christian education is interested as well in the highest, the best life.

Character education seeks only human approval for individual conduct; Christian education seeks also Divine approval for individual behavior.

Character education has reference only to powers resident in humankind; Christian education has reference, in addition, to powers inherent in the nature of God and of Jesus Christ.

"Modern education has widened enormously the circumference of the human mind, but it does not find a center for it unless the church school fulfils its special function. The secular school can give the child the consciousness of Law, but it is the church school which must give it the consciousness of God."

There are discouraging indications that church schools are losing ground. One denomination reports an average annual decrease in membership of fifty thousand, and an editorial in a paper of that denomination comments:

"It would be difficult to imagine facts more startling in their significance. The most imperative task immediately ahead of us is the creation of a new church school consciousness, the arousing of a new enthusiasm for and a new devotion to the work of religious education. We must be awakened to our peril. We must be enlisted in a new advance."

Figures seem to show that there are twenty-seven million young people in the United States under twenty-five years of age who have had no definite religious instruction. "Spiritual illiterates," they are well called. It is from this great army that most of the degenerates hail. Justice Lewis L. Fawcett, of the Supreme Court of New York State, gives a forcible reason for the continuance of church schools. "My experience during twenty-three years on the bench," he writes, "in which time over four thousand boys under the age of twenty-one years were convicted of crime before me, of whom but three were members of a Sunday School, has satisfied me of the value of Sunday Schools to the community, in helping safeguard it, to the extent to which Sunday Schools exist, from the growth of criminals. My experience also satisfies me of their value to the individual. In fact, I regard our Sunday

Schools, including those of all faiths, as the only effective means to stem the rising tide of vice and crime among our youth. Society carries the heavy burden of criminality chiefly because of the lack of religious training of the youth. If all the children could be kept under the influence of the Sunday School and the grown-ups were active in some church, we could close our prisons and jails, instead of being compelled to increase their number."

What Are the Objectives of the Church School? What is the church school seeking to accomplish? What is its basic purpose?

During the century and a half in which Sunday Schools have existed, different ideas have been held as to their purpose. Robert Raikes started them as a means of keeping ragged urchins off the streets and teaching them the three R's. They grew into schools for instruction in the Bible.

With the years the conception of the scope and function of church schools has been enlarged. They are still schools for the study and teaching of the Bible. But a church school is not fulfilling its mission if its objective ends here. Knowledge of the Bible is a means to an end. The end sought by the church school is not merely an intellectual one; it does not concern itself with the acquisition of Biblical knowledge alone. The study of the Bible should lead to acceptance of Christ and his standards, and to the development of Christian character and usefulness. We are identifying religion with the whole of life, and religious instruction as furnishing adult leadership along the lines of Christian living, individually and socially. In the words of Professor G. Walter Fiske, the scope of teaching is as broad and deep as experience itself. Its goals are social efficiency and complete living.

What is it that makes religious education religious? What is it that makes Christian religious education Christian? At a conference held last summer these and other weighty questions were discussed. As a basis for their discussion, the Educational Commission of the International Council of Religious Education made a statement of the objectives of Christian religious instruction, giving it by means of this series of questions:

1. Does it lead the pupil into a personal relationship with God?
2. Does it give the pupil an understanding and appreciation of the life and teachings of Jesus, lead him to accept Christ as Savior, Friend, Companion and Lord, and lead him into loyalty to Christ and to his cause?

These are fundamental. The other five are in a sense a test of our success in achieving the first two.

3. Does it lead to a progressive and continuous development of Christlike character?
4. Does it lead into enthusiastic and intelligent participation in the building of a Christian community and world?
5. Does it develop the ability and desire to participate in the life and work of the church?
6. Does it give a Christian interpretation of life and of the universe?
7. Does it give knowledge, understanding, and love of the Bible, and an intelligent appreciation of other records of Christian experience?

You have smiled at the quaintness of representations of Biblical scenes by the old Dutch masters. Landscapes, buildings, people, clothing, are such as the artists saw about them every day, not such as could ever have been found in Palestine. The artists of long ago lacked knowledge of Palestinian life and customs, but this was not the only reason why they illustrated the Bible in this way. The main reason was that they sought to make the Bible real. Our task is similar. We must endeavor to translate the Scriptures into terms of the life of today.

Are your pupils individualistic in spirit, or have they gained the social consciousness? To teach the Bible is not enough. To lead pupils to accept Christ as their Savior is not enough. To make them Christlike in service for others is an essential part of living the Christian life.

"Now it is the great work of nature to transmute sunlight into life. So it is the great end of Christian living to transmute the light of truth into the fruits of Christian living."

Is there an Age Limit for Church School Teachers? At what age should a church school teacher give up teaching? A recent article in a journal for

day school teachers advises one who is approaching the advanced age of thirty-five not to give up his position in the hope of securing a better one, for, it assures him, it will be practically impossible for him to secure another place at any salary, as all cities are asking for young teachers. Does this urge for young teachers exist in church schools? When should Elijah cast his mantle upon Elisha?

There is, happily, no age limit in the church school. It is not a question of age but of spirit. There are teachers too old at thirty-five, while others are still young enough at seventy-five.

The peril of the middle and later years is loss of zeal and enthusiasm for one's work and of faith in its results. No one should teach youth who has lost touch with youth, who considers the attitude of youth hopeless, who "wonders what the youth of today is coming to!" Yet a teacher who discovers the beginning of this spirit in himself should not hastily hand in his resignation. There is a better way out of the difficulty. If he is becoming old in spirit, if he is losing his enthusiasm for teaching and therefore wearying of the work, if his faith in the ideals and possibilities of youth is growing dimmer, let him treat his spirit as he would his health were it on the down grade. Let him renew the spirit of youth in his own heart.

One may wisely stop teaching if he is like Delane in one of Edith Wharton's novels of whom she writes: "His mind had been receptive up to a certain age, and had then snapped shut on what it possessed, like a replete crustacean never reached by another high tide. People, I had by this time found," the author continues, "all stopped living at one time or another, however many years longer they continued to be alive; and I suspected that Delane had stopped at about nineteen."

When Lord Balfour resigned his position as Prime Minister of England, he gave as his reason his dread of "that most insidious of all diseases," the inability with advancing years to solve old problems in new ways.

One should strive to bring into his teaching freshness and vividness, for to a stereotyped method which never varies, however good that method may be, may be attributed a part of the loss in church school attendance.

"I'm afraid I'll have to ask you for another dime," said a street-car conductor as he handed a silver piece back to a patron. "Is it counterfeit?" asked the embarrassed man as he produced a bright new ten-cent piece. "I guess not," replied the conductor, "but it's worn down so thin and smooth that I can't tell what it is. The company wouldn't take it from me."

"I wonder whether there is not a lesson for you and me in this incident," the man remarked to his companion, for it seems he was a minister who could find sermons in stones and books in running brooks. "Isn't there danger that our methods of presenting the truth may become so outworn and flat by unending repetition that the message itself may grow thin and almost meaningless to our pupils? Isn't it necessary to fuse it again in the heat of positive conviction, and remint it, as it were, in order that the inscription and superscription may be read and clearly understood by men? The gospel is good for every age and every man. It is only when it is interpreted in ways that are stale and perfunctory that men are doubtful or skeptical. When it is presented in terms fresh and vital, they embrace it gladly."

Should All Untrained Teachers Resign? It is not unusual for teachers to give as the reason for abandoning their work that the young people of today are too broadly educated for one with no special training to lead. But where is the school that has a sufficient number of expertly trained teachers? And what would become of our schools if no others would teach?

The stressing of the need today for highly trained teachers does not mean the repudiation of teachers who lack special training in methods and psychology. These are arts which may be learned through experience. "To the experienced teacher the findings of psychology are merely the putting into a better form of words those facts of which he has been aware, and upon recognition of which he has most probably acted."

Not all methods tried in our church schools are profitable. In an address in England a prominent Religious Educator, whose field is in the city where I live, said: "You move slower than we Americans, and I am inclined to think you build a more solid structure. America is a continent of experimenters—not only in the industrial world, but even in church and Sunday School work.

One day I see a Sunday School modeled on what is claimed to be the most perfect plan, and when I revisit the school a year hence I find that quite a new system has been adopted."

Right method helps wonderfully; but method should be servant, not master. In the opinion of a great preacher, it is "better far to entrust a growing child to a teacher who is fervent in spirit but wrong in method, than to one who is correct in method but cold in heart; better the teacher who is ignorant of pedagogical method, but whose sense of reality is vivid and wholesome, whose faith in Christ is a living passion, who will surround the child's soul with the holy influences of prayer and belief, and will continually call that soul to the worship and following of eternal ideals, than the teacher smoothly correct in every detail of instruction, and faultlessly equipped with the most modern view of things, but caring more for the mind's hold on facts than for the soul's hold on God."

This is not to minimize the importance of a knowledge of right methods of teaching and of a willingness to pay the price for wise preparation. If a teacher thinks himself poorly equipped for his task, let that be but a challenge to him to make himself qualified. "The best way to train the young is to train yourself at the same time," was a saying of Plato. And it was Disraeli who wisely observed that the secret of success is constancy to purpose.

There are summer schools where may be gained a knowledge of the principles and methods which have been found effective in working with young people. There are helpful books upon the art of teaching. There are training classes in many churches. If you are a teacher with no special training or experience in teaching, and if you lack opportunity or time for the intensive study to which reference has just been made, you can gain help in connection with our lessons this year from Luke's Gospel by a careful study of the way in which the Master Teacher taught.

The harvest was plenteous and more laborers were needed: this was one great reason why Jesus sent the Seventy forth on their mission. But there was also another reason: he would train these men for his work. They had been studying in his school, and now they were to learn by putting their knowledge into practice. They were not apostles, they were only disciples; they had not been with Jesus throughout his ministry and they were not skilled teachers, yet he entrusted them with his work and knew that in teaching others they would themselves learn; and they must have been among the number upon whom he depended for the continuance of his work after his death and resurrection. What an encouragement for untrained teachers who do not feel competent for the work! It is the Great Teacher's plan that they shall learn as they teach, and it is his wish that they carry on his work.

Characteristics Which Should Debar One from Teaching. There are certain characteristics which should prevent their possessor from ever teaching. "See that bottle of vinegar there?" questioned a hardware dealer in my city. It stands in a prominent place on his shelves. "I had a heated argument with a good customer once," he continued. "When it was finished, he was no longer a customer. Neither were a lot of his friends. I put that bottle there then; and it reminds me all the time that while vinegar can afford to be sour, I cannot."

Then there is the doleful person, whose long face would never lead one to suspect that the gospel he teaches is "good news." He drives scholars away. Said a hard-working woman, in explanation of her continued absence from church: "I used to go feeling tired and miserable, but I couldn't stand it, for when I saw the minister come into the pulpit, I used to say to myself, 'Poor man! he has more trouble than I have.'"

A Professor of Education at Harvard University has given a list of characteristics which disqualify their possessors for the teaching profession: "An inborn incapacity for good sense or fine feeling; persistent bad manners; an irritable or gloomy or despondent disposition; a stolid or sluggish mind; a narrow view of men and affairs." And he decries those who are "intellectual or moral prigs, incapable of winning or holding the respect or regard of pupils; egotists, or self-seekers."

A Few Lessons from the Master Teacher. In the Introduction to last year's volume these lessons were gleaned from a study of Christ's method of teach-

ing: He was pupil-centered, not material-centered; he refused to do his pupils' thinking for them; he brought his pupils to a decision regarding himself; he knew the Scriptures; he believed what he taught; he had a definite aim in all his teaching; he dealt with life experiences; he used apt illustrations to enforce his lessons; his message was dynamic; he taught by his example. This year, in connection with our study of his life as told by Luke, let us notice a few more teaching points.

Jesus Was a Profound Psychologist. He understood human nature. In the language of his time, "he knew what was in the heart of man": in the language of today, "he was a skilled Psychologist."

That different temperaments are differently affected by the same mode of treatment is a truism of psychology. Jesus always individualized. He did not use the same method with one and all. "Plants differ in their nature, and the gardener who wants to make the most of them studies them, finds out their peculiarities and treats them accordingly. To our Lord's eye, every human being had a moral and spiritual physiognomy of his own, and so he has not one universal and invariable method of dealing with all the souls that seek him; he deals with every soul according to its own special character and need. All are not to be won for Christ and the kingdom in the same way."

He Was Friend and Counselor. He knew the value of supplementing his direct instruction—his class work, as we may call it—by a closer relationship than that of Teacher. With his three most promising pupils he often withdrew for helpful, confidential talks. It was Louis Agassiz who said: "Pupils should not be subordinates, but young friends."

Jesus had a social nature. He took delight in visiting with people, in eating at their table, in using every opportunity for uttering words of wisdom or doing deeds of helpfulness.

Many of Jesus' words of appreciation have come down to us: "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel"; "Thou hast well said"; "Thou hast answered right." A teacher should not be chary of his words of commendation.

He Used Object Lessons. When his disciples were contending as to which of them was the greatest, Jesus placed a little child in their midst and said, "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." They remembered his lesson far better than they would have done had he merely told them the evil of wrong ambition and jealousy.

A grade teacher in a near-by city always has an object lesson before her pupils. Just now it is an enclosure which the pupils call their cemetery. A white paper fence surrounds it and within are two paper monuments. On one of them is inscribed the word "Ain't," and on the other the words "He Don't." Before each lies a wreath of paper flowers. The pupils rarely use these words now, but when they do, whether in school or out, they hastily correct themselves, for at once that object lesson rises before their minds to rebuke them.

He Often Taught by Parables. We have a number of parables in our course this year. From them learn how to tell a story. Take the parable of the Prodigal Son and count its words. You will find not a word for padding, nor a word that is superfluous. It requires great skill to tell a story with so few words and yet have it stand out so vividly and carry its message so clearly. Note how subordinate facts are mentioned but not dwelt upon; how the father and his sons are portrayed, their characters and motives made clear, without a word of description or tiresome analysis; how vivid is the dialogue; how full of movement the whole story; how dramatic the climax.

More telling than all the arguments that could be brought together as to the misery that follows evil living, and as to God's readiness to forgive, is this parable of the Prodigal Son. Indeed, it is extremely doubtful, as has been said, whether the quality of love expressed in this story could be expressed in the form of an argument.

A lecturer had talked for a long evening upon the extent and the misery of unemployment. He had given figures by the score—so many unemployed—so many in the bread line—so many children undernourished—so much money spent for relief.

"Didn't he make you realize the vastness of this problem?" questioned one man of another after the lecture.

"No," the latter replied, "his statistics left me cold."

"If they don't make you realize, nothing will. You'll never realize the horror of all this unemployment."

"I have grasped it," the man said with emphasis. "In two sentences I can show you the misery of all this poverty." And then slowly he said: "It's a night of storm, piercingly cold. The man who carried my bag from the station told me he had stolen his coat from a scarecrow."

There was silence then, comments the teller of this conversation. Rain beat against the window panes. Clamant storm held possession of the night. And somewhere out in the storm walked the man who had stolen his coat from a scarecrow.

"Yes," said the first speaker after a minute, "you have succeeded. Two sentences only—but what a picture they paint!"

In one sentence only some of Jesus' pictures are painted. The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field; which a man found, and hid; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls: and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

He Made Use of Repetition. "The Kingdom of God is like—"; recall how many similes Jesus used to instruct his disciples about the nature of the Kingdom of God. He would have them learn who he is, and repeatedly told them not by the same words but by different metaphors: I am the Way; the Truth; the Life; the Shepherd; the Vine; the Door; the Bread of Life; the Living Water; the Bridegroom; the Teacher; the Son.

Notice as you listen to an excellent sermon how the same thought is repeated over and over yet never in the same words. Each successive way of putting the truth throws upon it a new light. You are not bored. Your interest holds to the end. And you remember the lesson. It has been driven home.

Or read the sermons of that past master in the art of saying the same thing in ever new and striking ways, Dr. J. H. Jowett. The reading will richly repay you. Here is a sample. He has quoted Paul's question in his letter to the Romans: "Thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" and he writes:

"We shall never know Christ as he is to be known, until we begin to tell what we already know. In the realm of religion we never really know until we testify. Until the disciple becomes an apostle he is never an advanced disciple. Every teacher knows that his knowledge grows while he imparts it. While we declare the grace of redemption, grace more abounds towards us. While we testify as to the way of peace, we are led into the more secret place. If we would be fine learners, we must be ready teachers. Truths which hitherto shone like candles will burn like stars."

His Words were Provocative of Thought. Have you noticed how often Jesus teaches by contrasts—antithesis of words and of ideas? It is the conduct of the Good Samaritan set over against that of the Priest and the Levite which shows in full relief the latter's guilt; similarly, Mary's peaceful attitude is contrasted with Martha's tormenting worry; Dives' abundance with Lazarus' misery; the gratitude of the Samaritan with the ingratitude of the nine other lepers; the publican's humility with the Pharisee's self-righteousness; the conduct of the men who made a large return in pounds and talents with that of the man who hid the pound in a napkin and buried the talent in the earth; the want of the woman of two mites with the superabundance of the rich givers; the wisdom of the five wise virgins with the folly of the five foolish virgins. Teaching by means of contrasts is forcible teaching. The beauty of goodness throws a limelight upon the ugliness of badness without unduly exploiting the badness.

Jesus frequently aroused and sustained attention by means of paradox: He that is not for me is against me; I am not come to bring peace but a sword; Whosoever hath to him shall be given; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath. Exaggeration (the camel which

passes through a needle's eye) and play upon words (Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church) he also used in order to arouse reflection and drive his truth home. There could have been no indifferent listeners in the group he addressed.

He Taught with Patience. Jesus was patient with his disciples. He did not expect too much of them. He adapted his teaching to their capacity. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now," he told them once. In the Gospels we see how gradually it was that they came to know him and to understand his lessons. Their traditions stood in the way of swift apprehension of their Master's words. "The light of his revelation was too dazzling for eyes accustomed to the twilight of Judaism. He opened the shutters one by one. One can see how his hand fingered the catches, longing to let in the full radiance. But he restrained himself to the capacity of his pupils. It was day by day, lesson by lesson, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little."

He Taught with Faith. His seed fell on thorny ground, for there was Pharisaic lore in the disciples' minds which again and again threatened to choke the good seed sown, but he was never discouraged. He gave no thought to the possibility of failure. He was the sower and God would give the harvest. He knew his Father's power and love, he knew the truth of his message, and he knew the power of the Holy Spirit to complete his work.

His disciples were slow in learning his lessons, but he never doubted that they would one day master them and would become his witnesses after his departure. He had faith in the possibilities of all men, and he led them to see the possibilities in their lives of which they had never dreamed. He brought out their hidden best, and started them on the upper road. We see him looking upon Zacchæus one day, a man whom other men's scorn had made defiant and hard, no doubt. He sees the good that lies dormant in the man's heart. He goes to Zacchæus' home, and by that act of sympathy and faith he makes of Zacchæus another man. The publican's heart is melted by Christ's faith in his better nature, and he becomes a penitent, his covetousness changes to generosity, his desire to profit from others becomes a desire to help others.

Our First Half Year's Course. During the last three years we have studied the life of Christ as told by Mark and by Matthew; this year we study the account given by Luke. Said Dr. T. R. Glover in a recent sermon: "I sometimes think that those of us who teach have a private door of our own into the character of Jesus Christ which those who are not engaged in teaching have not. He is so fascinating to a teacher. It is a source of sheer interest and delight to study the character of Jesus as you get it in the New Testament. As you study the life of Jesus Christ you find him so interesting and so varied and so delightful and so unimitable and so surprising and so wonderful!" Do you not agree with him?

What would it not mean for our pupils if we could this year lead them to see the real Jesus Christ with his interest in folks, his concern for their troubles, his ability to help, his power to uplift; to see him not merely as One who lived and taught in a distant land two thousand years ago, but as One who lives and teaches here and now; not merely as a memory, but also as a Reality, a Friend and Companion who comes into vital relation with our everyday lives; to see the social implications of his words and to apply them to all human questions and interests!

Our Second Half Year's Course. Luke's Gospel is an account of the life of Jesus, a "former treatise," which is continued in his Book of the Acts. Any life of Jesus which ends at the cross is an incomplete life. After six months' study of what Jesus began to do and to teach, we take up Luke's second volume, and study his account of what Jesus continued to do and to teach through his apostles.

In a study of The Acts there are many sidelights, varied and interesting, which make the setting, but in our teaching we must be careful not to become so involved in these that the forest is obscured by the trees, to use the well-known figure of speech.

"Let's carry with us ears and eyes for the time,
But hearts for the event,"

is Shakespeare's suggestion to which we must needs give heed. Ears and eyes attentive to explanations, orientalisms, historical and geographical setting, that we may teach intelligently, interestingly, and vividly, but hearts attuned to the event, that we may not miss what is of supreme importance, the spiritual force which is there for our guidance.

The Acts is a book of adventures vividly told. Yet is the apostolic age, with all its wonders, more wonderful than the age in which we live? "Could we bring together the happenings of the last thirty years, showing what men have seen of the wonders of God's love, would they be less marvelous than those told by the artist St. Luke?"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

The Writer. Luke was not one of the apostles. That he was a Greek we infer from the fact that he calls the people of Malta "barbarians," which was a custom of the Greeks. He was a man of culture and a trained observer. To Paul he was "the beloved physician" (Col. 4.14), and the companion of many of his journeys. Professor Robertson lists the Greek technical medical terms which Luke uses and adds: "Even if Paul had not told us that Luke was a physician, we could now see it to be true."

For Whom he Wrote. It was in accordance with Greek custom to dedicate a book to a friend, or to some wealthy patron who would provide for the expense of having copies made by hand. Luke dedicates his Gospel to a "most excellent" friend, Theophilus by name, to whom he would give information as to Jesus' life and words that he might have a firm basis for his faith. It is evident that Luke had all Greek Christians in mind in writing his Gospel.

His Sources. Luke "traced the course of all things accurately from the first," he tells us in his preface. For the portion that is common to all three Synoptists, he had for his information the earlier written Gospel according to Mark. For the nearly ten chapters (9.51 to 19.28), which are peculiar to his Gospel, he must have had special sources, among them (if we accept the earlier date for its writing), it is natural to believe, talks with the apostles who had been eye-witnesses of the events he records.

His Aim. The keynote of the Gospel is verse 19.10: "For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke's special purpose seems to have been to prove to his own countrymen, the Greeks, that Jesus is the Savior, not only of the Jews, but of the whole world. The universality of his Gospel is shown by the prominence given to Jesus' mission to the poor and the outcast; by such accounts not found in the other Gospels, as Jesus' first discourse at Nazareth, in which he referred to God's mercy shown to a Gentile widow and a Gentile leper; the parable of the Good Samaritan, which shows a Samaritan in better light than the Jews; the call of Zacchæus, a publican; the mission of the Seventy to the Gentiles.

We may call this the Gospel of Tenderness and World-wide Love, of Joy and Thanksgiving. "If we wish to contemplate in Jesus the Physician sent from God to heal sick humanity, the compassionate and merciful Son of man, the Savior of sinners and even of the greatest of sinners, let us read the Gospel of Luke."

The Contents of his Gospel. This is the longest book in the New Testament, being slightly longer than The Acts. It is two-thirds longer than Mark and one-tenth longer than Matthew.

Luke is called the first Christian hymnologist, for he alone gives these five great hymns: the Ave Maria, or the Angel's Salutation to the Virgin Mary; the Magnificat, or Song of Mary; the Benedictus, or Song of Zacharias, the Gloria in Excelsis, or Song of Angels; and the Nunc Dimittis, or Song of Simeon. His is the Gospel of the infancy and youth of Jesus. Here in Luke alone are given the accounts of the forerunner's birth, the presentation in the temple, the adoration of the shepherds, and the visit to the temple of the Boy at twelve years of age.

Luke is the only Evangelist who records all of the seven greatest events in the life of Jesus: his birth, baptism, temptation, transfiguration, death, resurrection, and ascension.

About half of the entire Gospel is not given by the other Evangelists. To Luke we are indebted for the parables of the Two Debtors, the Good Samaritan, the Friend at Midnight, the Rich Fool, the Barren Fig Tree, the Builder of the Tower, the King Going to War, the Lost Coin, the Prodigal Son, the Unjust Steward, the Rich Man and Lazarus, the Unprofitable Servant, the Importunate Widow, the Pharisee and the Publican, the Pounds (which resembles the Talents), and for the miracles of the draught of fishes, raising of the widow of Nain's son, cure of the woman with a spirit of infirmity, cure of the man with the dropsy, the healing of the ten lepers, the restoration of Malchus' ear; events such as the visit to the house of Martha and Mary, the sending out of the seventy disciples, the sojourn at the home of Zacchæus, the journey to Emmaus, etc., and for the records of our Lord's prayers at his baptism, after the cleansing of the leper, before the call of the twelve, at the transfiguration, and on the cross for his enemies.

The Outline.

I. Introduction, or Preface. 1.1-4.
II. Infancy and Youth of Jesus. 1.5 to 2.52.
III. Preparation for the Public Ministry. 3.1 to 4.13.
IV. Galilean Ministry. 4.14 to 9.50.
V. The Later Ministry, especially in Perea. 9.51 to 19.28.
VI. Last Visit to Jerusalem and Passion Week. 19.29 to 23.56.
VII. The Resurrection and Ascension. 24.

As Literature. Luke himself claims for his work fullness, order, accuracy, careful research. He is the trained historian, who gives philosophical comments upon the reasons for things; the bright, clever Greek, who writes animatedly and picturesquely.

"The style of this Gospel is more polished than the others, and savors of secular eloquence," declared St. Jerome. In his book upon The Gospel of Luke, Dr. Charles R. Erdman writes: "The Divine Spirit chose and equipped a rare instrument in the poetic and refined personality of Luke, and through him gave to the world that version of the Gospel story which is most exquisite in style and most finished in form."

THE ACTS

Its Title. The Acts, the book is called in the Revised Version; The Acts of the Apostles is its full title in the Authorized Version. It is not an account of the acts of all the apostles: it tells of the acts of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, but aside from the list of the apostles given in 1.13, only Peter, John and the two Jameses are mentioned again by name. I like the title given to the book by a native of Africa—Words Concerning Deeds.

Its Writer. Two theories are held in regard to the authorship of The Acts. Some scholars believe that it was edited by an unknown writer of the second century from several documents, among them the "Travel Documents," which were probably written by Luke. The majority of scholars believe that Luke was the writer of the entire book.

The book itself does not name the writer. However, in his introductory sentence, the writer tells us that it is a continuation of a former work; he addresses it to a certain Theophilus, to whom also the Third Gospel is addressed; and The Acts resembles the Third Gospel in vocabulary and style. The early Christian writers speak of Luke as the author of both the Third Gospel and The Acts. The Acts is Volume II, as it were, of Luke's History of the Origin and Spread of Christianity, the Gospel According to Luke being Volume I.

Luke was a Greek by birth, and a physician by profession. Not only was he Paul's companion on many journeys, as the use of the pronoun "we" shows, but he was with Paul in Rome when he wrote Colossians and Philemon, and was his sole companion and friend when he wrote his Second Epistle to Timothy shortly before his death. Luke is mentioned by name but three

times in all the New Testament; and each time by Paul, who calls him "the beloved physician."

The Purpose of the Book. The Acts is not a biography of the apostles. It is not an account of the acts, or lives, of even Peter and Paul. Peter disappears from the record after the fifteenth chapter, not because his work has ceased, but because the progress of Christianity has left Peter and the Jewish field on one side and has developed the Gentile field under Paul. The Acts is the history of the expansion of the Early Church. It is the story of men who had learned of Christ and were fulfilling his commission to teach the world. It is Christianity in action.

In his introduction, Luke declares the purpose of his writing and gives the three keynotes by which it is to be understood. As his former work, his Gospel, is a record of all that Jesus began to do and teach until he was received up, so this work is (1) a record of what Jesus continued to do and to teach through his followers. Jesus had charged them to be his witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth. The Acts records (2) how this command was fulfilled. It has been called "The First Volume of Missionary History." One sees the witnessing gradually carried out, and as one closes the book and leaves Paul a prisoner at Rome, one realizes that in him the gospel message had attained its goal, for Rome with its outreach meant the uttermost part of the earth in Paul's day. This command to preach the gospel was given "through the Holy Spirit," and it was through the power of the Holy Spirit that the command was obeyed. The Acts has been called (3) "The Gospel of the Holy Spirit," for his guidance is recognized at every step.

In the course of his narrative, Luke plainly shows the growth of Christianity from a Jewish sect to a world-wide religion; the freeing of Gentile Christianity from Jewish Law; and the supreme greatness of Paul, whose "acts" occupy three-fifths of the book.

The Character of the Book. "Luke loved a hero. And his great hero was Jesus. But when he turned from the greatest Hero of all he found human heroes whom he could love. His face glows as he tells of the dauntless young Stephen, the knightly prophet of the universal faith. He feels the noble power of the apostle Peter. He glories at the thought of the goodness of Barnabas. But his great human hero is the dauntless missionary traveler, the broadminded statesman, the passionate prophet of the new faith, the apostle Paul!"

It is turbulent history which the book records—a record of triumphant achievements in spite of Jewish jealousy, prejudice and persecution, pagan opposition, and Roman power.

The Reliability of the Book. It has been pointed out that the veracity of no ancient writing is so well attested as that of The Acts, because no other has such numerous points of contact in all directions with contemporary history, politics, and topography, whether Jewish or Greek or Roman. The history of The Acts covers a period of thirty years, enacted in Syria, Asia Minor, Greece and Italy. During that time political changes were frequent, and yet Luke is never found at fault, whether writing of imperial provinces or senatorial provinces, of proconsuls, procurators, politarchs, asiarchs, or prætors, or of the Sanhedrin and Herodian princes and rulers of synagogues.

Its Outline.

I. Introduction. 1.1-5.

II. The Christian Community at Jerusalem under the Leadership of Peter. 1.6 to 6.6.

III. The Martyrdom of Stephen. 6.7 to 8.1.

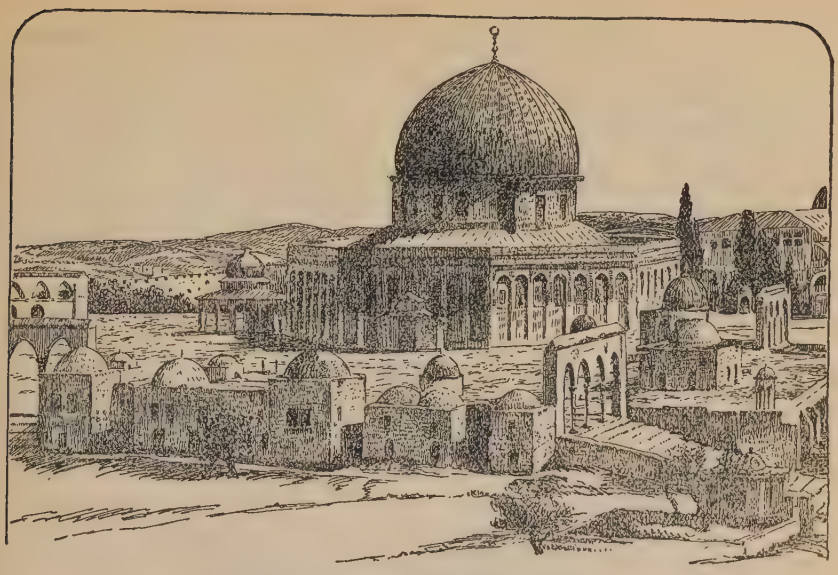
IV. Evangelization in Judea and Samaria under the Leadership of Philip and Peter. 8.2 to 11.18. (Paul's Conversion. 9.1-30.)

V. Ministry of Barnabas and Paul at Antioch in Syria. 11.19-30.

VI. Persecution of the Church at Jerusalem. 12.1-25.

VII. Evangelization of Asia Minor and Europe under the Leadership of Paul. 13.1 to 28.31.

VIII. Paul's Last Years. 21.17 to 28.31.



As the Temple Area Looks Today
The Mosque of Omar on the Site of the Temple

FIRST QUARTER

JESUS THE WORLD'S SAVIOR: STUDIES IN LUKE

(First Half of a Six-Months' Course)

LESSON I—JANUARY 4

THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

GOLDEN TEXT: Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to make ready his ways. Luke 1.76

LESSON Luke 1 DEVOTIONAL READING Luke 1.68-79

LUKE 1.8 Now it came to pass, while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, 9 according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to enter into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. 10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the hour of incense. 11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12 And Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. 13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: because thy supplication is heard, and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. 14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. 15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. 16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord their God. 17 And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him.

80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Preface to Luke's Gospel, verses 1-4. Luke himself, he tells us, was a careful historian, who obtained his information from those who were eyewitnesses of the events he records.

II. A Righteous Couple, verses 5-7. In accordance with his purpose of recording events in order, Luke begins with the prophecy of the forerunner's birth. Herod the Great reigned in Judea from 37 B.C. There lived in his days a priest named Zacharias, who was of the course of Abijah, the eighth in order of the twenty-four groups of priests established by David, each of which officiated for a week in the temple services in regular rotation. His wife Elisabeth was also of priestly descent. It is said that "they were both righteous before God," and this is explained as meaning that they were faithful in the keeping of the commandments and ordinances of the Mosaic law. "Most of the priests who appear in the Gospels are heartless formalists, if not worse; but there were some in whose hearts the ancient fire burned. In his origin, as in himself, John the Baptist represented the consummate flower of Judaism" (Alexander Maclaren).

III. The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold, verses 8-13. When the time came for Zacharias' group to officiate in the temple, lots were cast, as was customary, to determine which priest should offer the incense. "No priest might have this honor twice; and the number of priests was so great that many never offered the incense." The burning of the incense was "the highest mediatorial act, the most solemn part of the day's service, symbolizing Israel's accepted prayers," and the priest who had this privilege was ever afterwards called "rich." The coveted lot fell to Zacharias.

When Zacharias entered the Holy Place, the people stood without in the temple court, praying. The altar of incense was in the Holy Place in front of the curtain which shut off the Holy of Holies. On its right hand stood the table of showbread, and on its left, the golden candlestick. The two assistants whom Zacharias had chosen, as was the custom, each performed the part assigned him: one removed what had been left on the altar from the service of the evening before and departed backward. The other spread live coals on the altar and then left. Zacharias was alone. He advanced with the golden censer and spread the incense on the glowing coals. At that solemn moment, our record says, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him.

> "Dost smile at tale of seraph ministries?
> God sends the angels; thou must bring the eyes" (Langbridge).

"Supposing Zacharias' vision were wholly subjective, entirely internal to himself; still he would describe it as an external occurrence" (Walter F. Adeney). "The sanctity of the function he was discharging may have made him more sensitive to the unseen world. This experience was not hallucination, but had some objective reality; but what, we cannot say. Yet we cannot doubt that God has means of revelation beyond our common knowledge" (A. E. Garvie).

Zacharias was troubled and fearful. "Fear not," were the words he heard, and then came the promise that because his supplication had been heard he should have a son whom he should call John. "John" means Jehovah's Gift, or God is Gracious. Although Zacharias had, no doubt, often prayed for a son, it is natural to suppose that his prayer in the temple at this time had been for the coming of the Messiah, whose herald the son was to be. Dr. Plummer comments that the "and" (and thy wife shall bear thee a son) may mean that this is an additional boon, which is to prepare the way for the blessing prayed for and granted, and thus, like Solomon, Zacharias received the higher blessing for which he prayed, and also the lower blessing for which perhaps he did not pray at this time.

> "To have a life put into your hand, to be with that little life by day and by night, to shape it, not so much by what you consciously say as by what you are unconsciously in all your influence, example, and life,—what an opportunity this is! What God is doing in this world is making men and women, and when he puts a child in the cradle he says, You may help me" (Lyman Abbott).

The inner meaning which the angel and the vision and the message impress is that the birth of John was of great importance in the divine plan for the world. It was no ordinary event that happened in a priest's home and gave joy to the aged priest and his wife. It was the fulfilment of prophecy. It was an event which God in his providence destined to be a link in the chain of the world's redemption.

"It is one of the ways of God in the ordering of history to grant forerunners of great events or persons. The widespread superstition that such things as meteors or earthquakes are the heralds of mighty happenings in history, is nothing but a mistaken application of heaven's great principle of forerunning. In the stormy gusts and the sweeping rains of March we have the forerunners of the beauty of summer. In illness and sorrow and the open grave we have often the forerunners of changed and useful lives. Before the full sunshine of the Reformation there was the dawn in Wycliffe and his 'poor preachers' " (G. H. Morrison).

IV. The Character and Mission of John, verses 14-17. The son promised to Zacharias would bring joy and gladness not only to him but to many, for he would be truly great—great in the sight of the Lord.

It is one thing to be great in the sight of men, another thing to be great in the sight of the Lord. Who are those whom men account great? Men and women of high position, of vast wealth, of fine intellect—poets, novelists, artists, scientists—men noted for their military exploits, their explorations, or their discoveries in other realms. Who are those whom we may call great in the sight of the Lord? Those who do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with their God.

"Though thy name be borne abroad,
Like the wing'd seed, from shore to shore,
What thou art before thy God,
That thou art, and nothing more!"

The promised son would be a Nazirite, one who drank no wine nor strong drink (there is no reference to omitting the cutting of hair which was a mark of the Nazirite). See Num. 6.2-21; Mt. 3.4; Mk. 1.6. From birth he would be filled with the Holy Spirit: the Divine exaltation is here contrasted with the base excitement occasioned by strong drink. He would bring about the conversion of many of the children of Israel, and in the spirit and power of Elijah, with the same reforming energy, he would go before "his face," before the presence of God, who would come to the people in the Messiah. There is a reference here to Malachi's prediction, Mal. 3.1; 4.5, which had led the people to expect the return of Elijah, Lk. 9.19. His mission would be to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and to cause the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just. By doing this, he would make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him: compare Mal. 3.1.

"Only such a man can effect such a change, in a time of religious decay, as to turn many to God. It needs a strong arm to check the downward movement and reverse it. It takes a Hercules to stop the chariot racing down hill, and God's Herculeses are all made on one pattern, in so far that they scorn delights, and empty themselves of self that they may be filled with the Spirit" (Alexander Maclaren).

V. Zacharias' Doubt; His Return Home, verses 18-25.

VI. The Annunciation (Prediction of the Birth of Jesus), verses 26-38.

VII. Mary's Visit to Elisabeth, verses 39-45.

VIII. The Magnificat (Mary's Song), verses 46-56.

IX. The Birth of John, verses 57-66.

X. The Benedictus (Song of Zacharias), verses 67-79. This is a song of thanksgiving and of faith. It is in the Book of Common Prayer and is chanted by thousands of worshipers today. "While the occasion of this hymn was the birth of John, the forerunner of Jesus, yet only one stanza refers to this event. The whole burden of the hymn is the advent of the Messiah and the salvation he will bring. It speaks of the tender mercy of God, of the dayspring from on high, and of the Sun of Righteousness which is to arise upon the helpless, terrified wanderers of the night who are seated in darkness and the shadow of death, and it praises him who has come to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Charles R. Erdman).

XI. The Character of John, verse 80. Here we learn that the boy John grew normally in body and mind and spiritual powers; and that before his public ministry began his home was in the deserts of Judea, southeast of Jerusalem and west of the Dead Sea. Recall the statement made about the growth of the child Jesus. When he was ready for his great task, his "showing unto Israel" began.

"There is a classic sermon by Dr. Bushnell entitled Every Man's Life a Plan of God. Its main thesis is this, that God has a definite life-plan for every human being, guiding him visibly or invisibly, for some exact thing, which it will be the true significance and glory of his life to have accomplished. It is not given to many to work out this plan so definitely as did John. It is not uncommon to say of men like Lincoln that they have been raised up by God for some special task. It is none the less true of any one, however humble may be his capacities, that he may look upon his life as having a mission all its own in accordance with the will of God" (Frank G. Ward).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

They had no child, verse 7. "Wealth and sons are the ornaments of life," says the Koran. In Bagdad, it is said, a childless Jewess ties a rag about the cannon before the Governor's palace, saying: "O great gun, mighty gun, I wish a child, and if you will grant my wish I will make you a present when I untie this string."

He shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, verse 15. "Among the Romans it was the custom to bear the new-born child out into the night and to turn his face toward the stars of heaven. The Romans thought by exposing the faces of their infants to the starlight that the mysterious influences of the skies might reach their hearts and sanctify them in the very first hour of life."

They marvelled while he tarried, verse 21. The people were afraid that the officiating priest might be struck dead for omitting some formality (Lev. 16.13), hence the custom was for the priest to finish his ministry as quickly as possible. Once when Simon the Just delayed too long, the people became so anxious that they almost broke into the Holy Place, and afterwards they reproached him for his want of consideration for them.—One Volume Commentary.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

At the beginning of our era the Messiah had long been expected. His coming had been promised by the Old Testament prophets. Isaiah had declared that his coming would be announced by one who would prepare the way before him just as was customary before the coming of an earthly king: "The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of Jehovah; make level in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the uneven shall be made level, and the rough places a plain: and the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed." The prophet Malachi said that the messenger who should prepare the way for the coming of the King would be like the prophet Elijah. With the announcement of the birth of that messenger we begin our study of Jesus, the World's Savior.

The scene of the account in our lesson is the temple in Jerusalem. At the end of the week of service in the temple, Zacharias returned to his home in the hill country near by, where John was born.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Look up all that the New Testament writers tell us about Luke, the author of the Gospel which we shall study for six months: Col. 4.14; Philem. 24; 2 Tim. 4.11. You cannot better prepare for these coming six months' lessons than by getting a fresh grasp of the contents of this Third Gospel. Have you ever read it through "at a sitting"? Do so now. Make notes as you read, comparing it especially with the Gospel of Matthew, which we studied last year. Then read what is told about the Gospel of Luke in our Introduction.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
CHARACTER AND MISSION OF JOHN

Beginning the Lesson. Elijah was "Israel's first great prophet on a grand scale"—a scale so grand that his heroic figure casts a shadow the full length of

Israel's national life. Indeed, it falls very much farther, Dean James A. Beebe tells us. "This great personality is yet a potent influence in each of the three religions which trace their origins to the tent of Abraham. Among the Jews he is the annually expected guest at every Passover season and takes a place alongside of Moses and Messiah. The Mohammedans identify him with the Eternal Wanderer, who has drunk of the fountain of everlasting youth and who appears suddenly to correct great wrongs. And among Christians, the Greek Church regards him as the patron saint of the mountains, while the Roman Church insists that he was the founder of the Order of Barefooted Carmelite Monks."

A prophet of such power and spirit the son of Zacharias was to be. He became, as Zacharias foresaw he would become, the forerunner who made ready the ways of the Lord, the ways in which men are to walk; who heralded the coming of the dayspring, that fuller knowledge, that brighter light that guided their feet into the way of peace.

And yet he was more than a forerunner. He possessed the power to usher in an era of repentance, to turn the hearts of the fathers toward their children, to move the multitude to live justly. "The ascetic life, the unrestrained denunciatory ardor of the man, his rough handling of their religious sophistries, his aloofness from the common life and the conventional standpoints and standards, his fearlessness before his certainty of an impending judgment, the equality of his moral demand upon prince and pauper—these and other uncommon characteristics gained for John a prophet's hearing and a prophet's influence."

Successors of John the Baptist. One travels across what are known as the Bad Lands of the West; a long, treeless road; the hot sun heating the sand, and the sand adding its heat to the atmosphere; great and various colored rocks lifting themselves up in all manner of castellated forms in wonderful beauty, and here and there a tree or a little oasis of green grass where there is some running stream or spring. But by and by, after the long day, the traveler begins to approach the eastern border of the Bad Lands; the trees grow more numerous, the grass grows thicker, and presently he finds himself in a garden full of luxurious vegetation.

So, in the olden times, men travelled through the world as though it were a desert. There were prophets who were oases in the desert; here and there men who heard the voice of God, felt the presence of God, were stirred by the influences of God, and reported to their less happy fellows what they heard and saw and felt. But for the most part, men lived without the knowledge of God; they had not yet reached the moral and spiritual development in which the knowledge of God was possible. As spiritual development increased the appreciation of God increased. The numbers that knew him, realized him, rejoiced in him, increased. With the coming of Christ there was still larger vision; and now, if we did but know it, we have passed the desert, we have passed the oases, we have come into that epoch in which all the children of God may be prophets of God, priests unto him, kings ruling by his power, prophets listening to his word and interpreting his word to others.—Lyman Abbott.

There is a Glory in Laying Foundations as well as in Placing Capstones. It is only fair that each generation should take its turn in filling the rôle of John the Baptist. Other men have labored and we have entered into their labors. We shall only square the account as we lay foundations broad and sure on which our successors may build their finer achievements.—Charles R. Brown.

The League of the Straight Road. Just after the Great War a worker in the London Y.M.C.A. became interested in the case of a burglar who had an excellent record as a soldier, but after his release from prison could not obtain employment. Through this man she met his pals, and she decided to form a club. The club began with over forty men, all of whom had been in prison. The first rule of the club is this: "A member is expected to remember at all times that he has the honor of the League of the Straight Road to maintain and defend on all occasions, and he is expected to show the world that he is a man and a sportsman, whatever may happen to him." Each member introduces another and stands surety for him, and of them all only one has again been guilty of stealing. Miss Thomas, the founder, has been very successful in securing jobs for members of the League of the Straight Road.

How We May Be Heralds of the Christ. Let us consider what it is that we desire to do. We may put it into a single sentence: We desire to bring our friends to the knowledge, and thus to the love of Jesus Christ, and so to allegiance to him. What will bring that about? Our own example will do a great deal. The fact that we are manifestly devoted to Jesus Christ, that we are not only regular in our attendance upon those services in which we are brought near to him, but are glad to go and honestly regret to stay away, that the will of Jesus Christ affects our will,—all this is of aggressive value. Though we do not say a word, it helps. Christianity on Sunday, with a lack of Christianity between Sundays, does not help. If we so live as to make it plain to those who know us that Jesus Christ is an ever-present strength and joy to us; if they see that he makes us considerate of others, cheerful under trials, patient in affliction, self-sacrificing, and having the spirit of service,—that helps immeasurably.

To bring our friend where he will hear about Jesus Christ is a way to effect our desire for him. We may not be able to say the word which we want to say; but in the church, where the Scriptures are read and the gospel is preached, he may hear the word which he needs. If it were an appreciation for music which we wished to cultivate in him, we probably would not argue with him about the excellence of the works of the masters, we would take him to concerts, to as many concerts as we could get him to attend cheerfully. We would not urge him against his will, but we would very persistently invite him. We would not expect much at the beginning; he would probably say a great many times that he would never go again, and would revile music on general principles, but he would go if we kept after him, and by and by he would hear with his ears, and rejoice with his heart, and be converted musically. That is the right thing to do with the friend whom we would bring to an appreciation of religion. We will bring him at least to the service. He ought never to be compelled to come in, but the Christian in the house ought never to go to church on Sunday without inviting the member of the family who does not commonly go. That unwearying, cheerful invitation will accomplish much.—Dean Hodges, in The Human Nature of the Saints.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. The influence upon a child of home and ancestry.

2. A comparison of the mission of John the Baptist and that of a Christian minister. Dr. Lyman Abbott declared that the functions of a minister were to be a witness to a fact and a herald of a life.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How is it that Jesus was born about five or six B.C.? 2. What was the condition of the Roman world at his birth? 3. What was the condition of Palestine? 4. What instruction did Hebrew children receive in the home, as recorded in Dt. 6.6, 7? 5. What does Prov. 22.6 say? 6. What did Jesus' second question to his mother mean? 7. How did Jesus develop? 8. What are you doing to make yourself physically fit, mentally keen, and spiritually alive? 9. What lessons for parents has this account? 10. What lessons for youth?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

PREPARING THE WAY FOR JESUS

Beginning the Lesson. Who built the first temple? How was it destroyed? Who built the second temple? And what became of it? By whom was the third temple rebuilt?

In that third temple rows of magnificent marble columns, the four on the south being called Herod's Porch, surrounded the Court of the Gentiles, into which Jews and Gentiles alike could enter. A low balustrade warned all Gentiles that they could go no farther, on pain of death. The next Court was called the Court of the Women, and here the people regularly met for public worship. Here the "whole multitude of the people" were praying at the hour of incense, while through the narrow Court of Israel, into the Court of the Priests and on into the Holy Place, Zacharias and his two attendants had passed in white robes and unsandaled feet.

One of the attendants had carried a golden bowl full of incense, and the other another golden bowl full of burning coals. These they put on the altar of incense

and then they went out and left Zacharias alone. In this Holy Place there were also the seven-branched golden candlestick and the table of showbread, and behind heavy curtains and golden-covered doors was the most holy place of all, the Holy of Holies, which was entered only by the high priest and by him only once a year. As another priest in the Court of the Priests was sacrificing the evening lamb on the great Altar of Burnt Offering, it was the duty of Zacharias to take the incense and sprinkle it on the burning coals, whence a thick, fragrant smoke would arise together with the prayers of the people without.

What does our text from Luke's Gospel say then happened? (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

He Shall Be Great in the Sight of the Lord. One day a fire broke out in a theater and the building and contents were wholly destroyed. As the company who were to have acted there in the evening were discussing the fire, in rushed a fun-loving young page with a charred bit of wood. "There!" he exclaimed breathlessly, "I saved that! It's the exact middle. I knew A's life wouldn't be worth living if anything deprived him of the center of the stage."

How many more people do you suppose there are who covet that sort of greatness, than there are who covet greatness in the sight of the Lord? John the Baptist became great in the sight of the Lord, he cared nothing at all for greatness in the sight of men. When "all the world" flocked to hear him, he used every possible expression to make them see that he himself was nothing, a mere voice crying in the wilderness. How great he was in the sight of God we know from Jesus' words: "But wherefore went ye out? To see a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist."

Highways that Made Ready for the Coming of Christ. Isaiah, with wonderful vision of years to come, said, "Make straight in the desert a highway for our God." Now, in a very real sense, several great highways were built for the coming of King Jesus. The first was the Greek. About one hundred years after Nehemiah the whole Eastern world was conquered by Alexander the Great, who introduced Greek civilization. One of the results was that Greek became the common language of all nations in both commerce and the spread of knowledge and soon became the language of the Hebrew Scriptures. So the Greek conqueror, with no thought of doing so, made possible a world-wide understanding of the teachings of Jesus when he should come to earth. This language was one of the highways of his power.

The world around the Mediterranean had not been going to school to the Greeks more than long enough to learn their thoughts and language, when along came the wonderful growth of the Roman Empire. For swiftness of communication Rome built great roads all over the Eastern world. In its world-wide sway Rome brought about law and order. Consequently, without realizing it, the Romans built a great highway of law, order, and means of quick and safe communication for the Christ and his messengers.

But even more familiar to us is the highway of Hebrew spiritual life. When you grow older you will marvel at the wonderfully high and pure ideals you have been discovering in the prophets and other leaders of the Hebrews as compared with the lack of these among other peoples. In the text of our lesson today we have a most beautiful picture of these wonderful ideals in real life. Note the picture! See the old Hebrew priest "walking in all the commandments . . . blameless" and praying earnestly that the real messenger of God, so long expected, might be born in his home. Here also are the praying people and the answering God. Here is the messenger promised who shall be clean of lips and life and filled with the Holy Spirit. And for what is all this? "To make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him."—Henry Hoag Frost, in The Sunday School Journal.

Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord. It was Sunday, along toward evening. The snow had been falling heavily all day. Jerry Wilcox hitched up two horses to his new snowplow and made a wide path in front. As he was about to drive back to the barn it occurred to him to drive on to the meeting-house, not that any one was likely to get out after such a storm, but if anybody should, why, the path would help. After turning in at the gate of the meeting-house and

making a good path to the door, he said to himself, "I might as well plow round to the minister's door. He will have to come out, anyway." At the parsonage gate he remembered the Widow Stevens, farther on, who always went to church. And then because it was not worth while to come back on the same side of the street he crossed over, and made a good path on the other side. Next he thought of Deacon Graham, on the cross-street, and his own Sunday-school teacher round the corner; and so he plowed round that way and went home by another route.

After supper he remarked that he was going to church, just to see if anybody did get out. There was so good a path, his mother said she would go, too, and Jerry's father also decided to go along. The minister, looking out of his study window, had seen Jerry and his plow, and had taken courage. A number of families looked out at the ringing of the church bell, were surprised to find a path, and having been housed all day, thought it well to stir out and go to meeting. And so it happened that the minister looked over the largest evening congregation that had assembled since the cold weather set in.

The text that evening, happily, was, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord"; and the lesson was that, besides those who are to do great things, the world needs those who in faithfulness prepare the way for them.

Said the minister: "I find an illustration close at hand for the lesson of the evening. Few of you would have come to church this evening had not some one thoughtfully plowed a path. If the sermon of tonight does any good, a share in the joy of the accomplishment of that good belongs to him who prepared the way for the members of the congregation to come to the house of the Lord."—Adapted from The Youth's Companion.

Preparing the Way of the Lord in Your Own Life. Once upon a time I had a friend staying with me who was a chess expert. One night we played chess. Every game he won. One night, however, I thought I was doing better. But I soon realized that I was losing again. So I turned the board round and said, "What would you do if you were in my place?" "Well," he said, "you cannot win." Then he explained how, about twelve moves earlier, I had fallen into a trap which he had set. I was defeated before I knew it.

So also life is a number of actions all depending upon one another. Today's thoughts become tomorrow's desires. Desires become actions; and actions grow into habits. If you would live a pure life you must learn to think only pure thoughts. Religion does not promise that every one can come out of difficulty with flying colors. Everything depends upon the preparatory work.—From a Sermon by J. Opie Shields.

Young People's Society of Civil Engineers. Some years ago, during a Christian Endeavor convention in a large city, a conversation was overheard between two men who were discussing the probable meaning of the mystical letters "C.E." which appeared everywhere on banners, buttons, flags, and hatbands. After some argument it was decided that the convention that was in progress must be one of civil engineers.

What a suggestive phrase! Young People's Society of Civil Engineers—preparing the way of the Lord, making his paths straight! This is the chief business of young Christians today. The kingdom of Christ on earth is coming, and it is our work to get the world ready for it—to build the road over which the King shall come into his kingdom.—Forward.

Sentence Sermons. The best expression of joy, when long cherished desires are at last on the eve of accomplishment, is thanks to God.—Alexander Maclaren.

I see in every child the possibilities of a perfect man.—Froebel.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the entire second chapter of Luke. 2. Where was Jesus born? 3. Where was he taken to escape Herod, and why? 4. Where did he live during his boyhood and youth? 5. What do we know about the mother of Jesus? 6. Were there other children in his home? (Mk. 6.3.) 7. At what trade did he work while living in Nazareth? (Mk. 6.3.) 8. What does the verb "waxed," verse 40, mean? 9. How did the twelve-year-old Jesus differ from other boys of his age? 10. How long a journey was it from Nazareth to Jerusalem? (Use the scale of miles on your map.)

LESSON II—JANUARY 11

THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

GOLDEN TEXT: Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. Luke 2.52.

LESSON Luke 2 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 11.1-9

Luke 2.40 And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

41 And his parents went every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast; 43 and when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not; 44 but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance: 45 and when they found him not, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him. 46 And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions: 47 and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing. 49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house? 50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. 51 And he went down with them and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them: and his mother kept all "these" sayings in her heart.

52 And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Shepherds, the Angels, and the Babe, verses 1-20.

II. The Presentation of the Babe in the Temple, verses 21-24.

III. Simeon and the Nunc Dimittis; Anna the Prophetess, verses 25-39.

IV. The Development of Jesus, verses 40 and 52. With these words compare and contrast the words used by John the Baptist, the last words of our lesson last week. Like every one who has ever lived, Jesus began his life as a helpless Infant, and like all normal children his powers developed gradually. As a child he grew physically and waxed (grew) strong; as he increased in wisdom and stature, so he grew spiritually, in favor with God and men. He had a gradual development until he attained a perfect manhood. "At each stage he was perfect for that stage, but the perfection of a child is inferior to the perfection of a man; it is the difference between innocence and perfect holiness (Alfred Plummer).

"You know the Child Jesus in a picture at once, by a halo round his brow. There was no glory in his real life to mark him: we know this, for in after years his brethren thought his fame strange, and his townsmen rejected him. Gradually and gently he woke to consciousness of life and its manifold meanings; gradually, and not at once, he embraced the sphere of human duties, and he woke to his earthly relationships one by one—the Son, the Brother, the Citizen, the Master. It is a very deep and beautiful and precious truth that the Eternal Son had a human and progressive childhood."

> "Happy the child who is suffered to be and content to be what God meant him to be—a child while childhood lasts" (G. W. Robertson).

V. An Incident in the Childhood of Jesus, verses 41-51. Before the law, Joseph was the father of Jesus, and so Luke speaks of Joseph and Mary as the parents of Jesus, and notes that every year at the feast of the Passover they went to Jerusalem. Three times in this chapter Joseph is referred to as the father of Jesus. Dr. Garvie explains that Joseph is rightly called one of Jesus' parents, for in the home he provided for him, filled a parent's place and played a parent's part. To him God committed a trust and a task.

Women were not obliged to attend the Passover, but Mary accompanied Joseph on his annual pilgrimage, and when Jesus was twelve years old he went

with them. As a "Son of the Law" he was subject to its obligations respecting feasts, fasts, and the like.

Perhaps Jesus stayed in Jerusalem with friends, away from his parents, and perhaps he expected them to remain the full seven days, while they started back after fulfilling the necessary two days (see The Historical Background). Unknown to them, Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem, and they went a day's journey toward Nazareth before they missed him, for they supposed he was with kinsfolk or acquaintances in the same caravan. This supposition is not surprising, for in the caravan in which they naturally traveled there would be a large company from Nazareth and near-by towns, and the boys and young men would walk together in groups, the older ones going by themselves. Dr. Thompson questions whether there is ever a pilgrimage made from Jerusalem to the Jordan at the present day without the separation of parents and children equally prolonged.

"Lost! A boy lost! His father lost him! Being too busy to answer trivial questions during the years when fathers are the great and only heroes of boys, he let go his hold upon him! Yes, his mother lost him! Being much engrossed in her teas, dinners, and club programs, she let the maid hear the boy say his prayers and thus her grip slipped and the boy was lost to the home. Again! His church lost him! Being so much occupied with sermons for the wise and elderly who pay the bills, and having good care for dignity, the ministers and elders were unmindful of the human feelings of the boy in the pew, and made no provision in sermon or song or manly sport for his boyishness, and so the church and many sad-hearted parents are now looking earnestly for the lost boy!" (Men at Work).

Joseph and Mary spent part of one day hunting for their Boy in the caravan, another day in returning to Jerusalem, and on the third day they found him in the temple. There were rooms off from the temple courts where teachers, famous Doctors of the Law, were wont to meet their pupils, expound the law, and answer questions. A large part of the rabbinical books are said to consist of answers given by rabbis to their pupils' questions. Here, among the teachers and pupils, Joseph and Mary found the lost Boy, listening and asking questions which showed such understanding that all were amazed.

Mary, too, was astonished. Dr. A. B. Bruce suggests that her astonishment points to some contrast between a previous quiet, reserved manner of Jesus and his present bearing, which was a sudden flashing out of his inner life.

One of the most solemn moments in every parent's experience must be that one in which he first fully perceives, with pain and wonder and surprise, that his child is no longer a child, that he has outgrown the need of his parent's close supervision and care, that he has become a self-governing personality and must choose his own way, develop his own life. The parent must then learn to trust in the lasting power for good which their earlier relationship has impressed upon the life that is now passing out of his control.

"Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us?" Mary questioned, adding, "Thy father and I sought thee sorrowing." "How is it that ye sought me?" Jesus questioned in return, thus voicing his surprise that they had not known where to find him. "Knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" he further asked. The Greek reads "en tois tou patros mou," which literally translated is, In the hall of my Father; "tois" being the definite article in the dative plural unaccompanied by any noun, and we may therefore supply either "house," as in the King James' Version, or "affairs," "business," as in the Revised Version. "When Jesus tarried in Jerusalem and clung about the temple courts, it was the craving after knowledge, it was that sweet, vague outlook into vast cloud-swept fields of possible intelligence, which makes the poetry of any pure boy's life to-day—it was this lofty wish to know, that kept him there" (Phillips Brooks).

"What do you mean by 'a boy of promise'? Not a boy who has reached a great knowledge, but a boy who wants more knowledge than he can yet get; we call such 'a promising lad.' Your Heavenly Father has a like esti-

mate—whether for boys or girls, for men or women. He measures your promise by your wants" (George Matheson).

Joseph and Mary failed to understand the Boy's words, but Mary did not forget them—she kept all these sayings in her heart.

The parents of Jesus knew that he had powers which they had not. So, often, do the parents of young geniuses. The Hindu Brahmin who bowed before his little boy, saying, "To the divinity that is within you, my son!" was right. How many Isaac Watts and Benjamin Wests are snubbed by the arrogance of ignorant adults into hiding their God-given talents, we shall never know.

It may be that the first sight of Jerusalem and the temple, the religious observance of the feast, and the questions and answers of the rabbis, caused the real meaning of his life and mission to dawn upon Jesus' mind, caused him to realize his relation to his Father and his Father's work. Whatever his thoughts, he remained in the home at Nazareth for eighteen years longer, working meanwhile, no doubt, at the carpenter's trade, for that was the trade of Joseph.

Again we are told of his all-round development. He lived the natural life of a normal boy. Therefore he is an inspiration to every normal boy today. Erasmus called him "The Boy of Boys," and Irenæus said that he became a child that he might be the Savior of Children.

"Do I grow as my Master did? The test of a Christian is just his capacity for growth, ever becoming clearer-eyed, wider in knowledge, stronger in holy will, with a richer overflowing joyousness, and a larger passion for service and sacrifice" (W. L. Watkinson).

"O that I may grow!
What though Time cuts his furrows in my face,
My heart may ever add grace unto grace,
Graces with added days still keeping pace,
O that I may grow!" (M. D. Babcock.)

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

And the child grew, and waxed strong, verse 40. Christianity is the only religion that makes anything of the childhood of its Founder. The other religions of the world either have nothing to say about the childhood of their founders, or preserve only a few insignificant traditions. Tradition says that Lao-tse, the founder of Taoism, was born as an old man. And Christianity is the only religion that takes any particular account of children themselves. The Gospels are full of stories of Jesus' miracles in behalf of children, and of his love and tenderness toward children. The other religions are concerned only with adults. Their message is a message for adults.—Robert E. Speer.

When he was twelve years old, verse 42. It was a great day in a young Hebrew's boyhood when he became "Bar Mizvah." It marked the turning-point when he took his fate in his own hands. From then onward he was fully responsible for all he did. He knew that he had taken a very serious step. He must have felt almost as though he had suddenly become a man. "Bar Mizvah" is a Hebrew expression meaning "Son of the Commandment." When this name was given to the Hebrew boy on his thirteenth birthday, a solemn religious service was held, and the whole family met to rejoice and celebrate the festival. The Jews today still keep up this ancient custom, which they sometimes now call "Confirmation," borrowing that name from the Christian religion.—Gleanings.

He was subject unto them, verse 51. This seemingly casual remark is full of significance. With us in Syria obedience to parents has always been youth's crowning virtue. Individual initiative must not overstep the boundary line of this grace. Only in this way the patriarchal organization of the family can be kept intact. In my boyhood days in that country, whenever my father took me with him on a "visit of homage" to one of the lords of the land, the most fitting thing such a dignity could do to me was to place his hand upon my head and say with characteristic condescension, "Bright boy, and no doubt obedient to your parents."—Abraham Mitrie Rihbany, in The Syrian Christ.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Passover was the spring harvest festival which commemorated the deliverance from Egypt. It was one of the three Jewish feasts which the law (Ex. 23.17) directed every Jewish male to attend. Josephus says that two million seven hundred thousand pilgrims attended the Passover in A.D. 70. The other feasts, Pentecost and Tabernacles, were not so generally kept. The Passover festival began on the fourteenth of Nisan (April) and lasted seven days, but only the leisured class remained in Jerusalem the whole time. The barley harvest was setting in, and the farmers' presence was required at home. One who remained for two days only fulfilled the law, Dt. 16.7.

Nazareth is in Lower Galilee midway between the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean. It lies in a hollow amphitheater encircled by hills. From the southern hill one has a fine view of the Plain of Esdraelon on the south, of the Valley of the Jordan on the east and beyond it the mountains of Gilead, and on toward Carmel and the Mediterranean on the west. From the northern hills one sees the mountains of Galilee rising one above the other, while towering above them all is snow-capped Mount Hermon in the Lebanon Range.

The most interesting spot in Nazareth is Mary's Well, the fountain where Mary herself must have come to draw water. The women of Nazareth still congregate here to fill their water jars and exchange the news of the day.

It is eighty miles from Nazareth to Jerusalem.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

In that group in the temple where the Boy Jesus was found were the recognized teachers of the Law, among them perhaps the illustrious Hillel and Shammai. And in their method of instruction it was customary for the pupil to ask as well as answer questions. We cannot improve upon that method, and every member of a church school class, from the youngest to the oldest, should both hear their teachers and ask them questions.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE RELIGIOUS TRAINING OF JESUS

Beginning the Lesson. In the case of all rare excellence that is merely human, it is the first object of the biographer of a marvelous man to seek for surprising stories of his early life. The appetite for the marvelous in this matter is almost instinctive and invariable. Almost all men love to discover the early wonders which were prophetic of after-greatness. Apparently the reason is that we are unwilling to believe that wondrous excellence was attained by slow, patient labor. We get an excuse for our own slowness and stunted growth, by settling it once for all, that the original differences between such men and us were immeasurable. Therefore it is, I conceive, that we seek so eagerly for anecdotes of early precocity.

In this spirit the fathers of the primitive Church collected legends of the early life of Christ, stories of superhuman infancy: what the Infant and the Child said and did. Many of these legends are absurd; all, as resting on no authority, are rejected.

Very different from this is the spirit of the Bible narrative. Both in what it tells and in what it does not tell, one thing is plain, that the human life of the Son of God was natural. There was first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn. One anecdote and two verses of the general description, that is all which is told us of the Redeemer's childhood.—F. W. Robertson, Sermons.

Jesus was Trained at Home. God trusted his Son to be mothered and fathered in a village home. He still intrusts to human parents souls which have the possibilities of becoming his children. It may not have been within the power of earthly parents to divert Jesus from his mission, but the destiny of the human infant for time and eternity hangs largely upon the way in which his parents discharge their high responsibilities. To neglect to utilize the opportunities of religious culture which the home affords is to commit an injustice against the child and to betray a spiritual trust. It is the decline of

that sense of the parental religious responsibility that marked the earlier generations of our people which gives ground for the gravest apprehension concerning the immediate future of the Christian Church.—Editorial in The Christian Advocate.

The Religious Training of Jesus. From his use of the Scriptures we know that Jesus was a diligent student of the Old Testament in his youth. His quotations show also that he read it in the original Hebrew, and not in the Greek translation which was then in general use. Josephus, writing of those days, says: "We devote the greatest pains to the education of children, and to make the observance of the Law and the rules of piety which have been given us the most important business of our lives." And Philo tells us that the Jews were well instructed in the Law from their earliest youth.

The following interesting account of the early education given every Jewish boy, such as Jesus must have received, is by Dr. Edersheim.

The Boy Jesus at Work

A religious atmosphere surrounded a child of Jewish parents. As soon as he learned to speak his religious instruction began,—no doubt with such verses of Holy Script as composed that part of the Jewish Liturgy which answers to our Creed. Then would follow other passages from the Bible, short prayers, and select sayings of the sages. Special attention was paid to the culture of the memory, since forgetfulness might prove as fatal in its consequences as ignorance or neglect of the Law. Very early the child must have been taught what might be called his birthday-text, some verse of Scripture beginning, or ending with, or at least containing, the same letters as his Hebrew name. This guardian-promise the child would insert in his daily prayers. The earliest hymns taught would be the Psalms for the days of the week, or festive Psalms such as those connected with the festive pilgrimages to Zion. At five or six years of age the boy formed one of a semicircle of pupils about the teacher at school in the synagogue. All either stood or sat on the ground. Until ten years old the Scriptures were his only text book: from ten to fifteen he studied traditional law: then followed theological discussions. The Nazareth home was probably too poor to possess its own Sacred Volume or Rolls, and it was in the Synagogue that Jesus pored over them.

Youth's Prerogative. Big boys and girls are asking, "Why do we have to go to church?" "What is the use of family prayers?" "Other families don't have grace at table; why should we?" "Why can't we roam around evenings as other children do?"

And the children grow. They are in college now, and their years are counting up into the twenties, but still they ask questions. If the parental ear is sympathetic they sometimes confide their misgivings and problems to those who love them most. More often in the pride and reticence of youth they keep them locked within their breasts and give the impression that they cherish no serious thought at all. But let no parent, teacher or older friend conclude that the generation just coming on the stage is wholly irresponsible and entirely devoid of interest in the deeper concerns of human life, or that its prevailing mood is one of skepticism.

Aye, let the children ask their multitudinous and baffling and even exasperating questions. Let youth challenge every tradition, convention, custom. Let it look the older generation squarely in the face and ask, "What kind of world are you passing down to us anyway?" "Why is it so sordid and rotten in spots?" "Is there anything in the Christian religion?" "Does church membership make a man any better?" "How many Christians are really following Christ?" "Who was Christ and who and where is God?"

This is youth's prerogative—to ask questions. Thereby it keeps the older generation from stagnation and compels it to march forward with the advancing purposes of God.

But it behooves youth also to listen to the accumulated wisdom of the centuries. This universe is not one vast interrogation point. It speaks through the myriad voices of nature—the winds whispering through the trees, the pleasant tinkle of the brook, the bird song that ushers in the day. Not everything is in flux in the moral realm. Not every truth was discovered yesterday. The sages, the philosophers, the preachers and the prophets of the past still have something to say to the boys and girls of the twentieth century. It pays still to listen when the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount are read and the Apostles' Creed is recited, and the mighty "Te Deum" bursts from organ and choir. The story of the Prodigal Son is still the unmatched picture of the heart of God. The parable of the Good Samaritan still portrays our duty to whomsoever chances to be our neighbor.

Let youth ask its questions, but let it give due heed to what father and mother have tested out in experience and what their fathers and mothers also proved and what the boys and girls of today will know to be true when they come to be themselves fathers and mothers, namely, that this world is charged with the life of God, that he is speaking to us any moment that we care to listen, that life should be Christ-centered and not self-centered, that it is a far greater thing to rule one's own spirit than to capture a walled city, that when one does wrong it must be confessed and forgiven—The Congregationalist.

The Problem of the Younger Generation. Sometimes the young may be more right than the old, and sometimes the old may be more right than the young. It is not the part of a wise man to presume that either is right because of age or youth. What is important is to avoid a breach and collision between the young and the old, between one generation and another, and to get the maximum of truth by combining experience with freshness. Mary and Joseph are bent on one thing, the Boy of twelve on another. Both are right, but both have something to learn from one another.

Joseph and Mary learned by the scene in the temple to know the Child himself better. Parents too often take it for granted that they know their own children, all about them, just because they are their parents and have watched them growing up. But it is not so. Children are all new human beings, with new faculties and blendings of faculty. They are, moreover, mysterious to themselves, and not seldom full of reserve towards their parents, reserve which becomes more close if they detect an inquisitive strain on the parents' part. You cannot break down that reserve; you can only watch it gradually break down if they find they can trust you through a term of years. So Joseph and Mary got to know the Child better when they saw him among other people, and beheld him showing powers for which their home at Nazareth had not afforded scope and play.

To the Child himself it revealed, not that he was wrong in thinking his Heavenly Father nearer and greater to him than any one else, and that Father's house a place of learning and education more important than the learning about wood and iron, material and tools, but he also learned, when he saw his mother's anxious face and heard her troubled question, that there is a time for everything, and that he must not now take more time in the temple, but must go down and be subject to them in Nazareth and in the carpenter's shop.

That is a very large thing in a boy's or young man's education—to learn how to treat his parents properly, to adjust the balance between what he wants to do and what they want him to do, between what he thinks he ought to do and what they think he ought to do. To see two modern instances of this it is but necessary to recall Mr. Edmund Gosse's book, Father and Son, and the recent Life of Samuel Butler; a perusal of either would give their reader a strong impression of "how not to do it." For what we commonly see in life is an exhibition of faults on both sides.—Adapted from an Article by W. H. Draper.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. At what age should children be free from parental authority?

2. "I will not have an irreligious child," said Catherine Booth, and she did not. Could every mother say the same and have the same result?

3. Some one has said that his greatest objection to the parents of the past is that so many of them allowed themselves to believe that their own comfort and their children's morality were one and the same thing. Was that true? Is it true of parents today?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is Luke's summary of John's preaching? 2. How does John in his character and in his preaching recall the Old Testament? 3. Compare John and Elijah. 4. With John's words in verse 7 compare Jesus' words in Mt. 12.34 and 23.33. 5. What is the point in John's allusion to children of Abraham? 6. What sins in our own land would a John the Baptist rebuke today?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE BOY JESUS

Beginning the Lesson. You can all remember when you traveled on the railroad for half-fare; those of you who are under twelve years of age are still doing this. In Norway they have what seems on first hearing it a curious term for a half-fare ticket. There it is called an "unconfirmed ticket," and a full fare ticket is a "confirmed ticket." You see in that land every child upon reaching a certain age is supposed to have been confirmed—baptized—and to have become a member of the church, and so the term applies to the age of the child.

In Palestine there was a somewhat similar custom in regard to boys who reached the age of twelve or thirteen; they were expected to fulfil the requirements of the law and the temple, and one of those reuirements was that they attend the Passover Feast at Jerusalem. What great event in their history did that Feast commemorate? Where was Jesus living when he became "a son of the Law"? Where was he born? Where had he been taken between the Bethlehem life and the Nazareth life? Why? Do we know anything about his life at Nazareth before his visit to Jerusalem at the age of twelve? Tell the story of that visit.

The Boy Jesus at Home. Luther was wont to talk about him with much satisfaction as the Boy in the home, fetching water from the well and going on other errands, working with the carpenter's tools in Joseph's shop, and living the life of any healthy, normal lad. Here is a picture of the Lad as Dr. T. R. Glover draws it for us:

"The carpenter's shop, we may naturally suppose, was close to the house—a shop where men might count on good work and honest work—and what memories must have gathered about it! Those little brothers and sisters did not always agree and tempers would grow very warm and then the big Brother came and fetched them away from the little house to the shop and set one of them to picking up nails and the other to sweeping up shavings—to

help the carpenter. They helped him. Like small boys when they help, they got in his way at every turn. But somehow they slipped back to a jolly frame of mind. The big Brother told them stories and they came back different people."

He was like Other Boys.

He was a boy like other boys,
  And played and sported with the rest,
He had his troubles and his joys,
  And strove for mastery with the best.
He was great-hearted, tender, true,
  And brave as any boy could be,
And very gentle, for he knew,
  That Love is God's own Chivalry.
And one thing I am sure about,—
  He never tumbled into sin,
But kept himself, within, without,
  As God had made him, sweet and clean (John Oxenham).

How the Boy Grew. Jesus developed in four ways—physical, mental, spiritual and social. He advanced in wisdom (mental development), and stature (physical), and in favor with God (spiritual, or religious), and men (social). Stature means height, of course; Jesus was a normal Child and he kept growing taller and taller, larger and larger, just as all children do unless prevented by some disease. Jesus was "filled with wisdom" before he went upon that first visit to the temple at twelve years of age, and he advanced in wisdom afterwards. There are children of certain nationalities who give great promise when they enter our public schools, but rather early their ability to advance to higher and higher knowledge "peters out," and when the upper grades are reached they cannot keep up with average children. They can grow mentally just so far—they are mental dwarfs. Jesus was a mental Giant. "I would rather have a body only two feet high," Dr. Charles E. Jefferson declares, "with a mind inside my little skull capable of thinking great thoughts and appreciating noble people and lovely music and pictures, and dreaming beautiful dreams, than be as huge as Goliath with a little mind in my big skull no larger than the mind of a cat!" And who would not?

Jesus grew spiritually and socially. The grace of God was upon him: he advanced in favor with God and men. His spiritual life was nourished by prayer, communion with God, by the reading of the Word of God, and by attendance upon the religious services of his time. His social life was nourished by his constant services for others. Service is the active side of spiritual development. "You have seen certain persons suffering from the rickets—an abnormal development of the head or of one shoulder—while the rest of the body is puny and dwarfed. We almost turn away with a shudder from the sight of a person with this physical deformity. But if by some divine enlightenment we could see our inner natures, how many of us would be found suffering from spiritual rickets, the mental nature abnormally developed, while the spiritual faculties are dwarfed and dying!"

Over the entrance through the Samuel Dexter Memorial gate at Harvard there is this inscription: "Enter to grow in wisdom." On the inside of the gate one reads on leaving the grounds: "Depart to serve better thy country and thy kind."

Dr. Horace Bushnell speaks of expanding and expiring Christians, and likens the former to trees and the latter to flagstaffs. The tree Christians grow. The flagstaff Christians grew. The tree drinks in moisture through its leaves, and serves the world by its shade or its fruit. The flagstaff is dead, it serves indeed as a staff but when men see it they think not of it but of the flag, and it is destined in time to rot away and fall, utterly useless, to the ground. Which shall we be, expanding or expiring Christians?

How You May See if You Are Growing as the Boy Grew. Take a piece of paper, write upon it the day of the month and the year. Have some one weigh you and measure your exact height and write your "stature" on the paper. Then record how far you have gone in your studies, in day-school and Sunday School, which is your "wisdom." Think of any little careless or disagreeable habits you may have, and select one that other people do not like, so if you

were rid of it you would increase "in favor with man." Write that down; and also some habit which you do not have, the forming of which you think would be pleasing to your Heavenly Father. You would thus increase "in favor with God."

Have this paper where you can read it now and then. Keep it carefully. At the end of a year be measured and weighed again, notice whether you have conquered that habit that was annoying to other people and have formed the new one that would be pleasing to God. If the result is favorable, you may know certainly that you, like the Boy Jesus, have increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and men.—Edwin Hallock Byington, in The Children's Pulpit.

"Wondrous Child of Nazareth,
Let thy early love of learning,
Set our youthful spirits yearning
Daily to be growing wiser,
Thou our Teacher and Adviser,
Wondrous Child of Nazareth."

Obedient to Authority. Every now and then we read in the newspapers about some precocious child who at ten plays chess with the experts, or at twelve discusses the fourth dimension, or at fourteen paints fine pictures or writes beautiful poetry, or plays the violin so as to astonish the world, and the reporter adds, "Yet he is an obedient and happy child." The reporter does not seem to know that the more advanced the child's development of reason and of soul the more likely the child is to submit to his parents' authority. It is not the real genius, but only the one who apes genius who defies parents and others in authority.

"I am all right if I like my teacher," said Frank, when sent to the Principal's office. "But I can't get along with Mr. Wright."

"Look here," said the Principal, "you come to school to prepare for your life's work, I take it. Now when you step out into your life work you will quite likely be in a business where there are many bosses—a president, perhaps, and a vice-president, and a secretary and a treasurer, and several managers of various grades. You may like nine of them, and 'get along' with them well, but if there is a tenth whom you don't like and with whom you don't 'get along,' his vote alone may prevent your getting some promotion, and give it to the other boy who obeys all orders and 'gets along' with everybody. Here in school is your practicing time. Every teacher affords you an opportunity to learn, not only his subject but his type. There is somebody like him in the business world. Take advantage of your opportunities to learn both algebra and 'getting along' from Mr. Wright."

"I will, sir," said Frank, who is not really as foolish as he sometimes appears, "thank you, sir." And he went back to his class.

The greater the nascent powers you have, the more likely you are to subordinate yourself to those who, though they may not have achieved what you may achieve, have yet experience and knowledge of which you ought to take advantage.

If ever a boy on the edge of manhood had a right to judge for himself, be his own master and guide, it was Jesus, the Lad who felt within him the growth of something more than genius. But he was subject unto his parents.

Sentence Sermons. "If you are a child of God, your life in the home should reveal it."

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end and way;
But to act, that each tomorrow
Find us farther than today (Longfellow).

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What was Zacharias told would be the character and ministry of the son that was to come? 2. In what ways did John develop, as we learned two weeks ago? 3. Where did he live before beginning his preaching? 4. What great reformer of Old Testament times does John the Baptist resemble? 5. How did John show great self-assertion? 6. How did he show great self-abasement? 7. What parable does verse 9 recall? (Lk. 13.6-9.) 8. Why and how was John put to death?

LESSON III—JANUARY 18

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

GOLDEN TEXT: Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance. Luke 3.8

LESSON Luke 3 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 40.3-11

LUKE 3.7 He said therefore to the multitudes that went out to be baptized of him, Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. 9 And even now the axe also lieth at the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 10 And the multitudes asked him, saying, What then must we do? 11 And he answered and said unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath food, let him do likewise. 12 And there came also publicans to be baptized, and they said unto him, Teacher, what must we do? 13 And he said unto them, Extort no more than that which is appointed you. 14 And soldiers also asked him, saying, And we, what must we do? And he said unto them, Extort from no man by violence, neither accuse "any one" wrongfully; and be content with your wages.

15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether haply he were the Christ; 16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but there cometh he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and "in" fire: 17 whose fan is in his hand, thoroughly to cleanse his threshing-floor, and to gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. John's Preaching in the Wilderness, verses 1-6. See The Historical Background. To John, son of Zacharias, the word of the Lord came (he was made conscious that this was God's plan for him), directing him to go to the Jordan and preach the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins; thereby, says Luke, fulfilling the words of Isaiah (Isa. 40.3-5).

> "In the journal of George Fox we find him often speaking of the command of God within his own soul. 'I was moved,' he writes, 'to passe upp into your town,' or, 'I was moved to passe upp and down your Countrey to visite friends.' Not only the great purpose of life but the duty of any ordinary day was decided for him by what he believed to be the will of God. So in the lives of individuals to-day sometimes the word of the Lord comes. It may be a new purpose, some aim which at last we clearly perceive to be his way for us. Or it may be some truth which we thought we had always known but which now at last we understand as if it had been illuminated" (Ozora S. Davis).

"A hermit who suddenly began to preach by the Illinois River would doubtless get headlines in the newspapers and attract a crowd, but he would not fit in with our way of thinking about things, and he would doubtless be called a crank. The East is used to lonely teachers coming suddenly out of desert places, on fire with a message, and John would seem, therefore, more natural to them than he does to us. Moreover, what he announced to them they were expecting. Any morning might usher in the day of the Lord, and the coming of the promised Deliverer, and any lonely voice proclaiming that the time was ripe would immediately attract attention and a following and be accepted as one fulfilling prophecy" (Gaius Glenn Atkins).

"John baptized, that is, he used a purifying rite in connection with his preaching. It helps to remember the distinction between baptism as practised in the Christian Church, and as practised by John. In the church, baptism has come to be regarded as a dedicatory rite by some, and by others as an initial and confessional rite. But in the first use of it, by John and Jesus, it was a purifying rite. It was a confession, too, but of sin, and the need of cleansing, not, as later, of faith in a person, or a creed, although it did imply acceptance

of a man's leadership. To a Hebrew mind it was preaching by symbol as well as by word" (S. D. Gordon).

II. The Call to Repentance, verses 7-9. Our poet Lowell speaks of

"A kind of maddened John the Baptist
To whom the harshest word comes aptest,"

and harsh indeed, was John's word to the multitude who came to him to be baptized: "Ye offspring of vipers," was the way in which he addressed them. Vipers, serpents, were considered emblems of deceitfulness and wickedness; John called Pharisees and Sadducees by this term because, knowing their natural deceitfulness and cunning, he doubted the sincerity of their motive in coming to him. And he questioned them: "Who thought it worth while to warn you to flee from the Day of Judgment?" The phrase, the wrath to come, recalls the picture of serpents in the fields fleeing before the flames when the stubble is set on fire. The coming of the Messiah was expected to be a day of judgment, Lk. 2.23. Since the Pharisees thought themselves so righteous, they should not have feared the judgment; since the Sadducees professed not to believe in it, they should not have been disturbed.

"Bring forth therefore"—if you would escape the wrath—"fruits worthy of repentance," deeds that will prove the sincerity of your repentance.

"A new life is the best and most sublime penitence" (Martin Luther).

"And begin not to say in your hearts, We have Abraham to our father."

"'We be the seed of Abraham!' they cried,
So unaware they were that by the claim
They did but spread abroad the more their shame,
Boasting a covenant 'twere well to hide;
Against his great humility, their pride;
Against the courage which gave him his fame,
Their cowardice; against the holy flame
Of his believing, all that they denied" (Robert Whitaker).

"Even now the axe lies at the base of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit is hewn down and burnt." Fruit trees were taxed, and a tree that failed to yield good fruit was speedily cut down. Recall Christ's parable of the Barren Fig Tree, Lk. 13.6-9.

III. Special Counsel for Different Classes of Sinners, verses 10-14. The multitude, the publicans, and the soldiers were stirred by his preaching, and, trembling before his denunciation, inquired, "What then must we do?" John taught that religion has to do with life. The man who had food and raiment to spare should share with the man who lacked; the man whose business it was to collect taxes should be honest and collect only what was due; and the soldier whose business it was to keep peace should be merciful and just and contented. "The armed man, as the late war has shown, is in all ages subject to temptation to violence and outrage from which the civilian is normally immune. Sack and pillage with nameless attendant horrors have been in our generation proclaimed as justifiable in war. John urges discipline, (a) external, towards the population where they are stationed, (b) internal—contentment as against the spirit of unrest and mutiny."

"When we consider how difficult it is even for the best of us to take out of our closets the garment we do not really need and give it to another, we must sadly confess that we are in no position to throw any stones at the people to whom John preached, and that we, too, are farther from the Christian temper than we should be after two thousand years of preaching the Sermon on the Mount" (Gaius Glenn Atkins).

IV. The Certainty of the Messiah's Coming and its Consequences, verses 15-17. There was a general expectation of the coming of the Messiah at this time, and people began to wonder whether or not John might be he. "Like some solitary, stern crag which catches the light of the sun yet unrisen but hastening upwards, long before the shadowed valleys, John flamed above his generation all aglow with the light as the witness that in another moment it would spring above the eastern horizon" (Alexander Maclaren).

John told the people that while he baptized them with water, there was One coming, one mightier than he, the thong of whose shoe he was not worthy to unloose—the task of the humblest slave. When denouncing the people for their sins, John spoke in tones of regal authority; but he compared himself with the Coming One in words of deepest humility.

When Massillon preached the funeral sermon of Louis XIV, he began by looking long at the gorgeous catafalque on which the king's body lay, and then he said slowly, "My brethren, only God is great." Human greatness becomes littleness when the greatness of the Divine Life is considered. A Christian compares his life with that of the Model Life and must needs be as humble as was the Baptist when he thought of himself and of Christ.

John told the people that he baptized them with water, but the Coming One would baptize them in the Holy Spirit and in fire. "Take a modern Jew who has been converted into the Christian faith, and you will find that one of his favorite phrases by which he tries to give expression to his experience is this, 'I feel a burning within me.' What does he mean? He means that the sense of icy discipleship to law has become changed into a consciousness of warm discipleship to a Person. He was baptized with water, now he is baptized with fire" (J. H. Jowett). "John says, in effect: I can bring you to repentance, but no farther. My baptism gives no grace. His baptism will give you new spiritual life, and inward sanctification, holy fervor, and zeal in God's service" (Dummelow).

"The Spirit as fire shows us just where we are. I always thought the cupola on the City Hall in Brooklyn was made of stone until there was a fire, and then I discovered it was made of wood. We often have great ideas about ourselves until we let the Holy Spirit test us, and then we know just where we stand. The fire of the Spirit! This is no fiction! This is not something unrelated to life!" (John Douglas Adam).

His fan is in his hand, thoroughly to cleanse the threshing-floor, continued John, and to gather the wheat into his garner. The winnowing fan threw up the wheat and the chaff together; the wind then blew the chaff away, while the wheat fell in a heap, whence it could be carried to the granary, or storehouse. See Ps. 1.4. But the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire. Compare Christ's Parable of the Tares.

"John was correct in thinking that our Lord is a consuming fire, but he had not yet apprehended the nature of that fire, the love which burns with a destructive power against all that is opposed to love. As the object of the farmer is to get the pure wheat from the chaff, so it is Christ's object to get pure souls aflame with love, free from the dross and the impurities which depreciate them" (R. F. Horton).

V. Reproval of Herod and the Imprisonment of John, verses 18-20.

VI. The Baptism of Jesus, verses 21, 22.

VII. The Genealogy of Jesus, verses 23-38.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

To be baptized, verse 7. Water washes and purifies, water cools and comforts, water beautifies and refreshes. Throughout our part of the world, therefore, bathing typifies the cleansing and refreshing of the spirit by the cleansing and refreshing of the body. It is so hot in our burning, mid-day sun—so dry, dusty, is the day for the greater part of the year—so oppressive are thirst, perspiration, a growing sense of bodily discomfort and impurity, that, with a strong, silent longing, we look to water, water and immersion. The analogy between the outer and the inner to the imaginative Asiatic is most natural.—P. C. Mozoomdar, in An Oriental Christ.

Extort no more than that which is appointed you, verse 13. Shortly before the British assumed the Mandate over Palestine, it was said that the local agents, or publicans, who had authority to assess taxes on lands and tithes

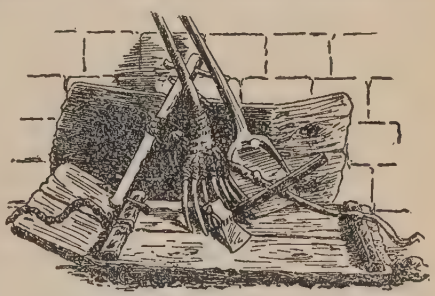
on produce and live stock, exacted a remuneration for themselves which even amounted sometimes to a hundred per cent.

The latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose, verse 16. Like other Orientals, Jesus wore sandals which were merely leather soles fastened to the feet by means of leather thongs. On entering a house one had his sandals taken off and his feet dusted by a servant. This was considered the most menial of all services, and the rabbis said: "Every service which a servant will perform for his master, a disciple will do for his rabbi, except loosing his sandal thong." Similar sandals are worn today by the people of the remote villages of Syria and by peasants of Greece, Italy and Spain.

He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire, verse 16. When in India the clothing gets soiled we wash it well. But when a metal becomes impure, the uncleanness, it is thought, pierces the very grain whereof the vessel is made. Then no washing can cleanse it; fire, blazing fire, alone can make it clean. Who was to teach them that? Their sins might be outwardly removed, and the garments of their character washed by the water of John's repentance. But to purge, change and renew the very substance of that character, was not some other baptism necessary—the baptism of fire and the spirit?—Mazoomdar.

Whose fan is in his hand, thoroughly to cleanse his threshing-floor, verse 17. The threshing-floor was a circular space in the field beaten hard or else paved, surrounded by a row of stones. The processes of threshing and winnowing are described by Dr. George M. Mackie, Missionary at Beyrout, in Bible Manners and Customs:

Sheaves are unbound and sprinkled over it, till the straw lies about a foot deep. The simplest mode of threshing is to drive cattle and donkeys over the dry straw, but the contrivance of the threshing-board is generally resorted to. This consists of thick planks nailed together, making an oblong of five by four feet, having lumps of rough basaltic rock let into the under-surface of the boards. (The upper and lower surfaces are shown in our cut.) A pair of oxen are yoked to it, and a man stands upon it, goad in hand, and drives the oxen round from morning till evening. These are the oxen that must not be muzzled, but allowed to pick up straws as often as they wish (Dt. 25.4). The winnowing is done by the shovel and the fan. By it the compound of straw, chaff and grain is tossed in the air, the chaff flies away over the hillside, and where it accumulates at the great public threshing-floors it is burnt up. The straw is deposited a few yards off, while the grain falls at the feet of the winnower. In this pile there is still a good deal of husk and straw, and it is at this concluding stage of the winnowing that the shovel is brought into use. Among the peasantry of the present day any recommendation of a winnowing-machine is met by the remonstrance that their fathers did it in this way.



Threshing and Winnowing Utensils

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The return of Elijah, as prophesied by Malachi, was needed to arouse the people and prepare them for the coming of the Christ. Elijah came, as it were, in John, the son of the priest Zacharias. As a boy and youth, John had abundant opportunity for becoming acquainted with the faults and fears and hopes of the people. At what age he left his father's home and withdrew to the barren Judean hills overlooking the Dead Sea, we do not know, but there he spent some years in solitude. His food was locusts and wild honey, his raiment was made of camel's hair and fastened by a leathern girdle. At the age of thirty, probably, for a man seldom entered public life before that

age, he felt impelled to leave his solitude and sound his trumpet calls of warning. He was recognized as a man sent from God, and all men were wondering whether or not he were the Christ, and were ready to acclaim him if he would but say the word. From the Fourth Gospel we learn that members of the Sanhedrin were so disturbed over the report that came to them about him that they appointed a special committee to go to him and secure officially his denial that he was the Christ.

Tiberius Cæsar. From a recently discovered statue

In the first two verses of our chapter Luke very carefully fixes the date. It was in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituræa and Trachonitis, and Lysansias tetrarch of Abilene, in the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas. Augustus died in 14 A.D., but for three years earlier Tiberius was associated with him and had equal authority in the government of the provinces, and accordingly the fifteenth year of his reign is reckoned from 11 A.D., making the date of John's preaching 26 A.D.

The region around the Jordan, where John preached and baptized, was the district on both sides of the Lower Jordan. It was in this region that the prophet Elijah once found a hiding place. Today the scenes are changing. A large hydro-electric station has recently been constructed here which makes use of the fall of the river to generate electricity. In the sixty miles between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea the river plunges down six hundred feet.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Let two pupils tell the story as Longfellow's poem entitled Vox Clamantis gives it, Part One of the First Passover, in The Divine Tragedy; one taking the part of the Priest and the other that of John.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE MESSAGE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Beginning the Lesson. Only the "shadow" of the Baptist falls across the scene of the Gospel story, but it is a truly great story, as Professor Deissmann says, the story of this reformer who stands alongside the gigantic figures of Isaiah and Jeremiah.

"Among the ceremonial washings common with the Jews, probably the one to which they attached the greatest importance was the baptism of proselytes. When a pagan desired to become a Jew, he was immersed in water as a sign that he washed away his old sins and his old superstitions and emerged a new man. He ceased to be a pagan; he became a Jew. When John the Baptist began his ministry, it was with the declaration that the Jew needed cleansing no less than the pagan. 'You call yourselves,' he said, 'children of Abraham. God could make out of the stones at your feet as good children as you are.' To emphasize his teaching he called on them to be baptized and reënter the Church of God as though they had been pagans. So in our own time a civic reformer, denouncing the corruption of the people, might call on native Americans to take out naturalization papers and so renew their vows of loyalty to their country."

The Message of John the Baptist. We are likely to apply the fulsome expression "great" to any one an inch above his fellows. One who never flattered said of him whose career was brief and whose death was tragic, that of womanborn none was greater than John the Baptist. A life which received this conspicuous commendation from our Savior must be a profitable example.

The prophet came to be possessed by the conviction that he was sent of God to preach the coming of the Christ. He used Isaiah's figure of preparing the way—that is, when a king was about to pass along their wretched roads of shifting sand, he sent messengers ahead to have the people fill up the valleys, lower the hills, make the crooked places straight and the rough places even for a king's highway. Thus with unfaltering faith John gave himself to preparing the royal way for Christ.

To-day the greatest hindrance to Christian advance is not the infidel—there are not many of them; is not even, as commonly supposed, the church member living in evident sin—people know the genuine well enough to detect the fraud; the greatest hindrance is the lethargic man, who supposes himself loyal to his king, while doing nothing to prepare the way for the Christ to proceed farther into human life.

And the prophet was a moral reformer. It is said that a cannon should be a hundred times heavier than its shot; and from his wilderness retreat there came this God-weighted man who had disciplined himself to despise human fame and favor. With no wind-swayed speech he spoke, but as a Voice. Herod, thou art the adulterer; you tax gatherers, extort only what you should; you Pharisees are a brood of vipers; you who boast of your blood relationship to Abraham, come to moral leadership. Thus with unflinching fearlessness he spoke, until hearts and consciences bent in penitence and prayer in the greatest turning toward righteousness the nation had seen since Ezra's time. For John it meant in his early maturity the felon's dungeon, and presently the executioner to bid him bend his neck at once. Even so; to live well is not always to live long; his task of preparation was completed, he was coronated to enjoy the fellowship of the faithful. And it approaches hypocrisy for us to spend time talking of baneful conditions, unless we are willing to pay our share of the price of effort and sacrifice that will purchase their reform.

With us usually the evangelist is one man, the social worker another. Has our Christian life any greater need than that in the same person shall be found John's evangelistic zeal and social passion? The skepticism with which John heard that Jesus was gentler than himself, that he was without axe or fire, but with a winsome charm that captivated calloused sinners and care-free children—possibly that skepticism indicates the difficulty of the combination. Yet it is found in the mellower, larger Christ, and should be oftener in his followers.—John William Langdale, in The Development of the Kingdom of God.

"About Face!" We find something worthy of the highest admiration in the whole-hearted way in which John gave himself to the subordinate and preparatory work of clearing the ground for the laying of new foundations. He was ready to become merely "a voice" if only he might cry, "Make ready the way of the Lord." He would gladly acquiesce in any order of progress where his work would "decrease," if thereby the reign of the Christian spirit might "increase."

His main message may be summed up in the word "Repent." He preached a repentance which does not mean a mere succession of weak and wet sobs over one's sins—it means an "about face." It calls for a change of purpose. It involves the making of all crooked paths straight and the rough ways of life smooth. He delivered his message in concrete terms to make clear the fact that true repentance does not rest in personal and hidden remorse—it must seek expression and bring forth fruit in altered conduct.

When he preached this definite, clear-cut doctrine of repentance it "found men," as we say, "where they live." He knew how to address his communications so that they would reach their destination. The multitudes who came to hear him as he preached in the wilderness did not go away saying: "Beautiful sermon." "Splendid effort." "One of his best." They came to him, saying, "What then shall we do?"

He gave them a direct answer. His "counsels to penitents" were clear and direct like his original summons to "about face." He met every man at the front door of his own particular interest and failing. He pointed a straight finger indicating the line each man was to take as he began his moral advance in preparation for the coming of him who was to rule all these interests of

daily life. In the expression of penitence, sobs are cheap and tears are low-priced. But deeds of restitution and new modes of life are above rubies.

In his every utterance this preacher in the wilderness brought out the truth that real religion is not form or ceremony; it does not rest upon the accidents of race or birth; it is not best expressed in sobbing emotion nor in frightened remorse. The question as to the reality and worth of a man's religion turns at last upon his fruitfulness, upon what grows out of him steadily and evenly as he moves ahead in his appointed calling.

The revival of religion needed to-day to prepare for the fuller coming of the Son of Man into our earthly life and to secure that richer baptism of all our relationships in the divine spirit, is a revival strongly ethical and genuinely social rather than ecclesiastical or emotional. Let the call issue north, south, east and west for an "about face" toward righteousness in the common relations of everyday life!—Charles R. Brown, in The Master's Way.

He That Hath Two Coats, Let him Impart to him that Hath None. Those who attended the great missionary conference in Washington a few years ago, had the privilege of seeing on the platform a slender, brown man, short of stature, and frail of health, who gave an impassioned address. He was Toyohiko Kagawa, the greatest living spiritual force in Japan.

He more than carried out the injunction of John the Baptist when he contracted trachoma one night in the slums by sharing his single blanket with a diseased man. In consequence he is half blind, but he will not allow that fact to handicap his work.

Kagawa was trailed for years by the police, because of his friendship for the laboring classes, was fined three times and imprisoned twice. A child of the common people himself, he lived and suffered with them for fifteen years in the slums of Kobe. "The more I studied the slums," he writes, "the more I realized we can stop them only by curing their causes. I went from the slums into the labor movement to do away with poverty and pauperism." And he accomplished his purpose in part at least, for the Japanese Government is now assisting the man it jailed to reclaim the slums in which he lived.

The mayor of Tokyo offered him a salary of $9,000 to become head of the social work of the city. He refused the offer, and then accepted the position without pay as a bit of social service. He has at his disposal annually $400,000, eight hundred employees, and the supervision of one hundred and forty institutions for social betterment. He inspects tenement houses and sanitation and institutes great changes in the living conditions of Tokyo's masses of underprivileged.

He is engaged in leading the churches in a "Million Souls for Christ" movement which aims to increase his followers in Japan in five years from one-quarter to a whole million. "It is not," as some one has said, "a million souls to occupy comfortable pew ends that the flaming evangelist means, but a million souls to go down among the outcasts, become their friends, and bring them love and hope. Such is the spiritual revolution whose flag is being unfurled before the Japanese churches, a call to free themselves from bourgeois and class-limited selfishness and to get close to the fisherman, farmer, miner, and industrialist, and ease their burden in the spirit of Christ." "Christ is the Will to love," he cries—"the eternal loving Will to save all who are in crimes and sins and those who are suffering."

One who knows well his life and work says of him: "A compelling dramatic orator, a brilliant novelist, a scholar, a flaming evangelist, a lover of humanity and a born leader of men, this little man may yet tower as high in Japanese life as does the beloved mountain of Fujiyama lift its august beauty above Tokyo."

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. What sort of preaching is needed to stir men's hearts today?

2. In working for a new age, why did John insist on moral and spiritual preparation when the Jewish hope was so largely political and international? To what extent is improvement in political and international life dependent upon moral and spiritual regeneration? Why did Jesus line up personally with John's movement instead of sending John a letter of endorsement or a

contribution for the good of the movement? Why does the Kingdom of God demand the personal commitment of all who are interested in it? What sins in personal and national life call for confession and repentance in order that a new and better age may be brought in? What men and what movements can you mention which are making for a new day?—A. Bruce Curry, in Jesus and His Cause.

3. John's preaching of social justice. "Whatever line of business a Christian man works in, he must work in it as a Christian."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the connection between the baptism and the temptation of Jesus? 2. Is the account of Christ's temptation a literal story of exact happenings and real dialogue or is it a dramatic account of spiritual experiences? 3. Were the temptations not keenly felt, and of no real danger to Christ? 4. Could Christ be sinless and yet tempted? 5. What is the meaning of each temptation? 6. Which answer of Jesus refutes our saying that "The end justifies the means"? 7. Give an example of the way in which each of the three temptations of Jesus comes to us? 8. What does 1 Cor. 10.13 say about our temptations?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

A COURAGEOUS REFORMER

Beginning the Lesson. No serious work can be done without preparation. Not even a game of ball can be well played without knowing the game and practising it often. Not even a school examination can be passed without getting ready for it by hard study. Nobody can be a motorman without learning how, or a soldier without being drilled. Thus the boy John, son of the priest Zacharias, would first study the life of the woods. He would spend his holidays camping among the hills. He would learn how to make a hut, and how to get fire by rubbing sticks together, and how to find food and cook it, and how to see his way where there was no path. He would get acquainted with the habits of the wild bees, so as to know where they kept their honey, and how to take it without getting stung. He would get his mother to teach him how to make grasshopper cake. He would make friends with the wild animals, so that he might live safely in their neighborhood. Thus he would prepare himself to be a hermit.

But that was only a beginning. All his hermit life was meant to prepare him to be a herald of the King. In order to be the herald of a king one must know the king when he appears. And in order to know the King of Glory it was necessary to have a pure heart and to be accustomed to the presence of God. So years went by, and John still lived in the depths of the woods. He cared little about what he had to eat or to drink, and was not at all particular about his clothes. He devoted himself wholly to God, saying his prayers in the face of the stars and of the sun, feeling and seeing God in the wonderful world about him, and trying in every way to increase in the knowledge and the love of God. And that went on till John was thirty years of age.

Then, one day, the voice which had called him into the woods, told that it was time for him to go out. "Come," said the voice, "and stand beside the river. Then speak to all who pass by, saying that the King is coming, and that if they wish to see him they must first make their hearts clean of sin, and as a sign of it they must have their bodies washed in the running water; they must be baptized and, presently, among the company, you will find the King himself.—George Hodges, in When the King Came.

A Courageous Reformer. In this third chapter of Luke we see John as the forerunner of the Messiah. The people flocked to hear him, aristocrats and peasants alike, and were deeply impressed by his warning words. When another great reformer, John Knox, was preaching, an ambassador of Queen Elizabeth heard him and reported to the queen that "The voice of him stirred me more than five hundred trumpets." And to a similar degree the people were stirred by John the Baptist.

Some one has aptly said that the common newspaper term "an assignment," describes John's life work. He was "a man sent," entirely forgetful of self, completely engrossed in the work of carrying out the assignment of God. His

austere life in the desert, his marvelous faith in Jesus as the Son of God, his self-forgetfulness in a preëminently self-seeking age, his fearless, uncompromising denunciation of all evils of his time, and his tragic death, make him one of the most interesting of Bible characters.

Fruits Worthy of Repentance. When the Czar of Russia visited Paris many years ago in the month of October, the trees were full of blossoms. The flowers were so skillfully made of paper and wired to the trees that they would have deceived any one who did not know that trees could not bear real blossoms at that time of the year. The Pharisees could not deceive God with false blossoms or fruit, John told them. The fruit worthy of repentance must be genuine. Repentance looks outward toward the future as well as backward toward the past. It was not enough for those Pharisees to admit that they had sinned; it was not enough for them sincerely to mourn their sins; it was not even enough for them to cease to do evil: they must also begin to do well.

A missionary in Manchuria visited Korea and in a conversation with Chinese merchants there who were not Christians the latter asked him, "Are the Christians in Manchuria the same sort as the Christians here?"

"I don't know," the missionary replied; "what are the Christians here like?"

"Good men. Good men."

"Why do you think that they are such good men?"

"Oh, a man owed us an account five years ago of twenty dollars. He refused to acknowledge more than ten, and we had no redress. A few months ago he became a Christian and came and asked us to turn up that old account and insisted on paying it with interest, after all these years."

That Korean Christian put into practice John's counsel to the publicans. What was it?

Religion Has to Do with Life. An English lord returned from church one Sunday morning fuming with rage at the preacher. "He is one of those pestilential people," he railed, "who suppose that religion has to do with a man's private life."

The people were stirred by John's preaching, and they trembled before his denunciations. "What must we do?" they questioned, and John told them that religion had to do with their lives, that the man who had more than enough food and raiment should share these necessities with the one who needed them, that the man whose business it was to collect taxes should be honest and collect no more than was due, that the soldier whose business it was to keep the peace should be just and merciful and contented. What a pestilential fellow he is, they may have reasoned, for they had thought that religion consisted in keeping fast days and sabbaths, in making long prayers and giving tithes, but they had not considered that it had anything to do with their business, their homes, their everyday social living.

Similar is the attitude of some people today who account themselves Christians. They are like the small boy whose writing was being criticized by his mother. "Your spelling is terrible!" she exclaimed. "Oh, well, mother, don't you see that this isn't a spelling lesson? It's a composition," the youth replied.

Ruskin says that if you were to cut a square inch out of any of Turner's skies, you would find the Infinite in it. It ought to be true that if you cut an hour or a moment out of any part of your days, you would find religion in it. Christianity is not a book religion, nor a creed religion, nor a Sunday religion: it is a life religion, a deed religion, a seven-days-in-the-week religion.

Sentence Sermons. Repentance is regret made manifest in reformation.—William George Jordan.

The only amends for the past which we can make will be to add to the past no more past for which amends are needed.—Robert E. Speer.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Tell the story of the baptism of Jesus. 2. Where did Jesus go after his baptism, and why did he go there? 3. In what ways was Jesus tempted in the wilderness? 4. What is temptation? 5. What is the first story about temptation told in the Bible? 6. What are some of the temptations that come to boys and girls? 7. To young men and women? 8. How can you gain help in fighting your temptations?

LESSON IV—JANUARY 25

JESUS TEMPTED

GOLDEN TEXT: In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted. Hebrews 2.18

LESSON Luke 3.21 to 4.30 DEVOTIONAL READING Romans 8.31-39

LUKE 4 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led in the Spirit in the wilderness 2 during forty days, being tempted of the devil. And he did eat nothing in those days: and when they were completed, he hungered. 3 And the devil said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command this stone that it become bread. 4 And Jesus answered unto him, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone. 5 And he led him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said unto him, To thee will I give all this authority, and the glory of them: for it hath been delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. 7 If thou therefore wilt worship before me, it shall all be thine. 8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 9 And he led him to Jerusalem, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: 10 for it is written,

He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, to guard thee:

11 and,

On their hands they shall bear thee up,
Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.

12 And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God.

13 And when the devil had completed every temptation, he departed from him for a season.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Nature of Christ's Temptations, verses 1, 2. Yielding to the control of the Holy Spirit, which had come to him in a special way at his baptism, Jesus went from the Jordan into the neighboring wilderness, that he might there meditate undisturbed upon the work God had given him to do. As the story is told in Mark, Jesus seems to have waged his great struggle throughout his wilderness sojourn, but as it is told in Matthew and Luke the specific temptations seem to have come at the end of the period.

No human companionship had Jesus in his desert experience, and he himself must have related it, for in no other way could it have become known. In his account the devil is represented as standing in person beside him, pointing to the stones around them, transporting him to the top of the hill, and to the pinnacle of the temple. Had Jesus listened to the words of the evil one in person, knowing that he was the evil one, as the literal interpretation of the story would have it, they could have had no temptation for him. In a dramatic way, by a series of images which his followers well understood, he told them about the conflict which took place in his mind, the inner and spiritual struggle through which he passed.

> "There must be something so attractive about a temptation, so deceptive, so persuasive, that even a good man shall feel inclined to accept the invitation. The choice which we all make, sinners though we are, is not between the known good and the known bad: it is between two courses of action, each of which appears to be good. It is very rarely that we sin, saying boldly to ourselves, 'This is plainly in defiance of the will of God, but I will do it.' No, we somehow persuade ourselves that darkness is light, and evil is good. We do the bidding of the devil, but in order to get us to do it he has to disguise himself so that we may not recognize him."

Then, too, telling his experience in story form was the best way in which Jesus could let his disciples understand his temptations and gain from them their helpful lessons. "So great was the distance, mental, moral and spiritual, between the Master and his disciples that, had he recorded his experiences with prosaic accuracy, and not poetic mysticism, they could not have understood him. The disguised, subtle, and plausible suggestion of evil in which his moral discernment and spiritual vision discovered temptations, would not have appeared dangerous or injurious to their blunter sensibilities. It was

quite in accordance with his usual method as a teacher that he should seek to reach the reason and grip the conscience by embodying truth in a tale."

"To Luther it was a great thing that Jesus Christ was tempted. As he says in some of his quaint self-revelations, it was this more than anything else that had helped him to endure his own temptation. The same thing has been felt by many since Luther's day, who have found comfort in the fact that Jesus was tempted like as we are, and yet without sin. In the sorrows and troubles of life, in their weary toil, men have found great help and strength in the thought that this was the way the Master trod, that he knows it, that he understands it, that he has been through it all before" (W. B. Selbie).

II. The Temptation to Free Himself from the Limitations of his Humanity, verses 3, 4. During a long period Jesus had eaten nothing, and when he was hungry the devil said unto him, "If thou art the Son of God, command this stone that it become bread." The word "if" may be taken in the sense of "since": Since you have the power (Jesus had just been assured of this at his baptism), why not make use of it for yourself? The question which Jesus had to settle was, should he for his personal relief use power which was given him for the sake of the kingdom, or should he trust his Father and accept whatever sufferings his Father might send? His answer was, Thou shalt trust.

"Everywhere to-day the same temptation presses upon us all. In the use of the positions in which we have been placed, of the power involved, of the money we handle, of the opportunities presented—in all alike the power of this temptation is felt. It is hardly possible to take up a paper without seeing some illustration of the abuse of trust. Our generation needs a great revival of the simple sense of fidelity to our trusts. No one of us is likely to cultivate too sensitive a conscience concerning any power that has come into his possession. Let him ask himself how his power has come? for what end it was given? whether he is using it simply and solely for that end, or is making it, rather, a means for his own personal gain?" (Henry Churchill King).

"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone," were the words with which Jesus met this temptation. If we recall the setting of the quotation from Deuteronomy as it is given in full in Matthew—Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,—we see that his meaning is: The Israelites were hungry and were fed by the word of God, for he commanded his manna to fall: so I, who am hungry, may be miraculously fed if it is his will: my part is to trust to his providence, not to my own. Throughout his ministry, Jesus never once used for his own advantage his power to work a miracle.

"There are necessities more profound than hunger. The fundamental craving of human life—and many a human being, though oppressed by poverty and hunger, still feels the deeper need—is for capacity, inspiration, regeneration, personality, power" (Francis Greenwood Peabody).

III. The Temptation to Establish an Earthly rather than a Spiritual Kingdom, verses 5-8. The Jews were chafing under the Roman yoke. They expected a Messiah who would free them from Rome and establish an earthly kingdom greater than that of their father David. What might Jesus not accomplish if he yielded to their expectations and established an earthly kingdom! All his countrymen would rally to his side if he adopted the rôle of a temporal Messiah; for such a Messiah they would sacrifice their lives freely and gladly The devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. Jesus might have all this authority and the glory of them—if he would pay the price. Would it not be a quicker and easier road to travel than the road to Calvary? To seek temporal instead of eternal good, to build up a material instead of a spiritual kingdom, would be to ally himself with the devil, to worship before him.

"'If thou therefore wilt worship before me.' Evidently we are to understand that he was tempted to do something which on reflection appeared to him

equivalent to an act of homage to the evil spirit. Perhaps the thought was that the kingdom could be brought in more quickly and easily if he would make some compromise and ally himself with the great ones of the world; with the Roman power; with the scribes and Pharisees. As if some popular preacher to-day should be tempted to think, 'I shall do more good for God, I shall be more influential and people will listen to me better, and I shall preach religion more effectively by compromising a little, keeping friends with the powerful, by putting less emphasis on certain important truths which I deeply feel'" (J. Paterson Smyth).

"It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve": with these words Jesus met the temptation to ambition.

> There is a similar common temptation today: ignore God, descend to any sin that will further your ambition. "I have known men," writes Bishop McConnell, "who in their hearts abhorred the concessions they had to make to get political and financial leaders to throw power on the side of a good cause, the arrogant ignorance of moral issues they had to put up with, the violation of their own self-respect to which they had to submit, the toning down of their own moral fervor. To none of these would they ever have yielded if it had not been for the 'good of the cause.' Jesus could have longed to get hold of power for the good of men with such urgency as to constitute it a real temptation. Leaders of the Christian church have been yielding to the same temptation for fifteen hundred years."

IV. The Temptation to Presume upon God's Call, verses 9-12. Throughout his ministry Jesus was asked for a "sign" of his divine Sonship, but here at the beginning of his work he settled that question once for all: conscious as he was of his oneness with the Father, he would not make trial of him to prove this to the world. "To leap unhurt from a pinnacle of the temple was to rival a mountain goat or a chamois, but it had no connection at all with spiritual power and was no sign of disposition and ability to save men from their sins. To abandon the region of men's actual need and work wonders, not for their relief but for mere display, was to trespass against the Father's love and to mistake the Father's intention" (Marcus Dods).

> "Cast thyself down" sums up all the arts of sensationalism, whereby we advertise our religion, our politics, our arts, our social position. The preacher who depends on language, on epigram, on voice and gesture—who attracts admiration to himself and thinks of how it will strike the public—that man, that woman, is very near the peril of the pinnacle. This ordeal by fire, which is to prove God, is an impious perversion of the martyrdom by fire, which proves man" (P. W. Wilson).

V. The Tempter Vanquished, verse 13. When the devil had completed every temptation, he departed from him for a season. "The moment that the obedience of the life was established, the mental tumult settled into peace within him" (Phillips Brooks).

Toward the close of his ministry Jesus referred to a whole series of temptations that had beset him, when he said to his disciples, "Ye are they who have continued with me in my temptations." Rightly do we think of Jesus as sinless, but we are wrong in our thinking if we suppose that he did not have to battle with temptations. In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.

"Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world by his temptations, as well as by his crucifixion. In the wilderness sin meets him, as on the cross death meets him; and he suffers. He conquers, but he suffers. He bruises the serpent's head, but the serpent stings his heel. Thus it is that he can be touched with a feeling for our infirmities. He knows how it is. He knows by hard experience how bitter a thing it is to fight with the devil. He in whom we see God, sympathizes" (George Hodges).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Command this stone that it become bread, verse 3. Oriental bread is made in small, thin, flat loaves, or cakes, and many of the stones lying about in the

wilderness resembled them in shape. The sight of the stones may have increased the pangs of hunger. The Jews were looking for a Messiah who would perform just such a miracle as that of turning stones into bread. The rabbis said that when he came the trees would bear fruit the year round, and a single grape would load a wagon and from it men would draw wine as from a cask.

He led him up, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, verse 5. "A man will take a visitor to the roof of his house in Palestine today to show him the beautiful view, declaring as he does so that 'We can see the whole world from the top of my house.'"

Cast thyself down from hence, verse 9. Religious men in the East have a tendency to become heroes. If the aspirations to become pious once seize us in that part of the world, we hate reason and calculation in every form. Fear of desperate deeds become almost synonymous with infidelity. Rashness, recklessness, become a positive passion. Daring courage takes the form of a strong love for physical suffering. The anchorite believes himself, and is believed by others, to be able to work miracles. There is a semi-sceptical desire to draw largely upon the omnipotency and all-mercifulness of providence, and thus put its sufficiency to a severe test. The devotee instinctively wishes to produce an effect upon the world by the startling nature of his self-imperilment. Dangers and miseries are coveted, formidable risks are run, and hairbreadth escapes are made. If the rash enterprises into which zealots launch with a view to their own distinction were analyzed by the scrutiny of spiritual insight, three-fourths thereof would resolve themselves into an impulse to hurl themselves from mountain-tops, in the vain hope that angels would minister to their safety.—Mozoomdar.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Bible record gives us a glimpse of Jesus as a boy of twelve growing in stature and wisdom and grace, and then passes over in silence the eighteen following years. Early in the summer of A.D. 27, probably, when Jesus was a Man of thirty, he left his home in Nazareth and went eastward to the Jordan and then fifteen miles down the eastern side of the river to Bethany beyond Jordan—if scholars are correct in identifying this site as the place where John was baptizing. (The traditional site is at the ford opposite Jericho.) Here he was baptized by John and thus consecrated for the great tasks awaiting him. The sixth of January is held sacred by the Oriental Church as the anniversary of his baptism, and annually on that day multitudes come to bathe in the river.

Jesus felt the need of withdrawing from the crowd and seeking a quiet place for fasting, prayer and meditation. The wilderness to which he went is the desolate, hilly region west of the northern end of the Dead Sea. There he met his temptation. Milton shows a true appreciation of the magnitude of the struggle when he makes his Paradise Regained a paraphrase of the struggle and the victory. And likewise does a recent German writer who says, "The future of the whole race was hanging in those days on the purity of soul, the courage and the faithfulness of a single Man."

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Each one's reaction to temptation depends somewhat upon his desires, largely upon habit, even in small matters, much upon the tone of the public opinion to which he is exposed, and partly upon the idea that is enthroned in his imagination. The Church school teacher cannot seek directly to control the individual tendencies of pupils—they were set by heredity; nor to change the habits which have been set by early training; nor the tone caused by what is to them public opinion, which is controlled by conditions largely economic. What he can seek to do directly is to enthrone a controlling ideal.

This is why it is so important to present Jesus as a positive, constructive ideal. He will lead us in our battle with evil. In his temptation he is our Exemplar. Seek to give your pupils a positive, inspiring vision of an active, powerful, sympathetic Christ, able and willing to help them in all seasons of temptation and trouble.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

CONFLICTING IDEALS

Beginning the Lesson. Jesus began his life as an unthinking Infant. He grew in knowledge and wisdom during the thirty years of life at home in Nazareth, and gradually the realization of his mission came to him. That realization was made clearer at his baptism. How should he face his mission? How should he carry it out? In the wilderness he deliberately counted the cost. He considered the means at his command. And there came into his mind conflicting ideals: which should be rejected? The story he told of this his time of storm and stress is our theme today.

The Way to Spiritual Consciousness Lies through Loneliness. You know Richard Hole's arresting picture of the Temptation of Jesus. It represents a young Man on whose face is portrayed the stress of mind and soul through which he is passing, seated on a rock in a desert. There is nothing else in the picture; it is "just a Man grappling with his destiny." Had a disciple been there as spectator, that is all he would have seen—the figure of Jesus whose face showed an intense inward struggle—and the desert.

In one of his Lenten Sermons Lyman Abbott trenchantly wrote: "Throughout the whole range of the experience of men in contact with God, of which the Old and New Testaments are matchless records, the Infinite always reveals himself in silence. In the most impressive manifestations of power it was the still, small voice that spoke with final authority; out of the tumult of action the prophet, who went before the Christ and for many centuries foreshadowed his coming, went into the lonely place to meet God and be born again into the knowledge of his purposes. The desert and solitary place are not more sacred than the city square or the crowded street; but they are symbols of the solitude in which the tumult of the senses and of the activities have died into a silence in which the divine voice becomes audible, and a man comes into such possession of himself that he can surrender himself to God."

Think of the problems that Jesus faced at this time. He knew himself endowed with unique powers and summoned to the work of redemption. How should this work be inaugurated? How should it be carried on? How should he use the powers that were his? What means might he use to convince the public? What toil and loneliness and sorrow of heart did his mission entail for him, and what would be his inevitable end? Was there not an easier way than the one his mind assured him was the best way? Could he accomplish his purpose by a shorter, speedier course? Must he tread the way that would lead to the cross? Could he not speedily gain the allegiance of the people by granting them such a "sign" at the outset that would serve as divine credentials, and then would it not be easy to gain all the people for the Kingdom of God?

"Why should he fast
With power to make stones bread; why fear, with succor
Of angels at his call;
Why fail, when all the world was to his Father
A golden ball,
One out of many, but a little present
For a beloved Son?"

All or None for Self. Jesus was human as well as divine. He knew the pangs of hunger, the weariness of limb, the burden of the heat of the day. Why not use his powers to free himself from all suffering and trouble? He would then have greater strength to relieve the suffering and trouble of others. Since a wise conservation of his strength would work for the good of others, why not work miracles for his own benefit? Yet to have yielded to this temptation would have meant moral and spiritual defeat. "He could thus have exempted himself from all the normal conditions of life and gone through the world seeming to share with us and yet never sharing at all," Dr. Gaius Glenn Atkins explains. "More than that, such a temptation once yielded to would have returned again and again with redoubled force, until at last we should have had, instead of a Christ who did everything for others and never lifted a hand for himself, a Christ who always satisfied himself, doing nothing for others—that means no Christ at all."

Jesus Gave up Good for Better. J. Patterson Smyth, in his book entitled Myself and Other Problems, clearly shows that the temptation to hurl himself from the pinnacle of the temple presented to Jesus a choice between what would quickly help on his mission and what would be infinitely better in the end:

"How could he best bring to the poor troubled world the blessing of the Kingdom of God? Should he unfurl the banner of the Kingdom with the hosts of Heaven at his command? Should he win allegiance at once by showing his miraculous powers? The people looked for miracles as the proof of the Messiah's claims. They would not accept him otherwise. We see them later again and again demanding a sign from Heaven. Should he give them now an incontestable sign? If he should cast himself from the heights in the midst of the assembled worshipers, or start in some miraculous way corresponding to this, he would certainly be received with rapturous acclaim, and from the temple could go forth in triumphant march, crowned with continual miracles, bowing all people to his sway.

"'There is your opportunity,' whispers the tempter in his ear. 'Show yourself allied with the Almighty. Bring in with power this Kingdom of God with which you think to bless humanity. Thus without suffering and weary delay—thus will you reach your goal.'

"Would not this be a real temptation to the Son of Man? Not for his own sake, of course. But for the sake of the poor, troubled, sinful world to whom he might bring more quickly the Kingdom of God. It must have appealed to him for the moment, at least.

"But he knew that wonder and faith are very different things. To startle men by miracles would not necessarily make them better. He is sent to reveal the affection, the tender pain and self-sacrifice of God. So he looked on the two alternatives. On the one hand a weary road, disappointments, delays, suffering, the cross. On the other hand the age-long expectation of Israel that Messiah should lead them triumphant from the sanctuary of the temple. And Jesus made his choice."

The Voice of the Mind. Great powers throbbing in a human personality have their own way of urging great opportunities of expression. To the mind of Jesus, all alive with the apprehension of his own amazing endowments, came the thought of a great career of world conquest. He saw the glitter of swords, the waving of banners and all the mighty paraphernalia of victorious war. How quickly could he organize the good purpose of the world for a triumphant conflict. How mightily he could force goodness upon unwilling lives. It was the very picture John the Baptist had drawn of a judge with power in his hands. And the wonder of it swept like a gale through the sensitive mind of Jesus. But well he knew that such a victory would be the external mastery of irresponsive hearts. He had come to win the heart of the world and not to whip it into goodness. Not now as a judge but as a savior he had come. And it was the sorrowful way of sacrifice in which he must walk. He put away the thought of the military crown. Already he saw the picture of the cross. And so with tense battle another temptation was mastered.—Lynn H. Hough.

Wrong Roads for the Church. Jesus was the friend of the poor, he went about doing good, but he felt it to be a temptation of the devil to base his kingdom on bread, and to count upon an allegiance evoked by loaves and fishes.

This temptation is always with the Church, and it is not the less a temptation that there are many at the present time who turn it into an accusation. The Church dare not, either for itself or for others, contemplate a Kingdom of God founded upon bread. It must have pity for the poor—it must feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick, or be lost for ever; but it must have the hardness to say to itself and to all men, even though they are poor, Seek first the Kingdom of God; Labor not for the meat which perisheth; Man shall not live by bread alone. Its specific function is to make plain that in the Kingdom of God a perpetual primacy belongs to the spiritual, and that it may be the trial of any child of God, in humble faith in the Father, to maintain his sonship through hunger, pain, and death.

The second [third in Luke] temptation also has its lesson for all who are interested today in the coming of God's Kingdom. There is always a tendency

in the Church to trust to methods which appeal rather to the senses than to the soul, or which are believed to be reaching the soul though they never get past the sense. They may be cruder or more refined, sensational or connected with the symbolic side of worship, but the common character of all is that they fall short of being rational and spiritual. How tempting it is to trust to such impressions, as though the coming of the Kingdom were really secured by them—to trust, for example, to the feeling of awe and solemnity which comes upon us as we enter a great cathedral, or to the thrill which passes through us as we listen to the pure, passionless voice of a boy singing, or to the power of some great preacher's eloquence, or to the inexplicable influence of a sacrament, celebrated with mysterious reverence and splendor. How tempting it is, yet how completely beside the mark! The only Church which claims to perform a miracle as the very center of its worship falls whenever it makes the claim before this temptation. To turn bread and wine, under the very eyes of men, into the body and blood, soul and divinity of the Son of God, and to do it with mysterious and elaborate ceremonial, would be a miracle as astounding as for Jesus to throw himself down from the pinnacle of the temple and to light on earth unharmed—as astounding, and, in the impression it produced, as irrelevant to the work of God.

The truth of the last temptation [second in Luke] may be applied in various ways. There may be a bad institution in our environment: the liquor interest, or a corrupt interest in municipal or national politics. Do not alienate so powerful a section of society, we are sure to be told, by declaring the mind of Christ about their trade or their conduct. Recognize their right to exist, and they will recognize yours. Even in things less doubtful we have to take care that we do not ally the Church with what is alien to it, and especially that we do not count on that alliance for its strength. The Church is always being tempted to seek the alliance and patronage of things lower than itself—of the things that have power in this world: wealth, rank, social distinction, political status. And in all such cases, it is the lower which bribes the higher and takes advantage of it; we fall down and for the vain help he promises worship the Prince of this world, forgetting that he alone can be our help who claims our undivided allegiance for himself.—Condensed from The Way Everlasting, by James Denney.

Does the End Justify the Means? A brilliant career opens before the politician. If he becomes mayor or governor or senator, he will have the opportunity to do much for the welfare of others. But to win the election he will have to make "deals" that are not quite on the level. Why not do so? Doesn't the end justify the means?—Sidney A. Weston.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. The temptation to use power for self. "The wrong appeal may be made to you, not in the realm of bodily cravings in the desert, nor yet in the way of appeal to cheap sensationalism on the temple pinnacle, but rather in the high mountain experience of ambition for power. There are few tests of character finer or more revealing than the way in which power is used."

2. The good is the enemy of the best. "Confucianism, which is good as far as it goes, is athwart the pathway of Christianity, the best."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What modern diseases seem to resemble what was called demon possession? 2. Why did Jesus bid the leper show himself to the priests? (Lev. 14.2.) 3. Why did he charge the leper not to tell others of his cure? (Mk. 1.45.) 4. What explanations of Jesus' healing power are given in Mk. 5.28, 29; 8.17; 9.29? 5. How do medical missions carry out the spirit of Jesus? 6. Does the task of ministering to physical ills belong to the Church?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HOW TO OVERCOME TEMPTATION

Beginning the Lesson. "Curious, what little things change the course of history": thus Bruce Barton begins his book entitled The Man of Galilee.

"Here is a swift and narrow river, a petty affair as rivers go. A river which starts with high ideals in the mountain peaks, but drops down below sea level after it leaves the Lake of Galilee, and stays below until it throws its fresh

waters hopelessly into the depths of the Dead Sea. Just a deep ditch in the desert, with a tropical tangle of vegetation along the banks, and hills above that are so badly washed as to be almost sterile. Certainly not a stream that could hope for any large place in the memory of nations.

"And yet—one day a fiery preacher, roughly dressed, wades out in it to baptize his converts. A fair young Man stands for a moment on the bank and then steps in after the preacher. And thereupon the swift and crooked little stream becomes the most famous river in the world."

This river had been famous to the people of Palestine throughout its history, for it is practically their only river, as all the other rivers of Palestine are short and are dry most of the year. But when those two young men entered it they made it famous for all men everywhere.

What is the name of the river, and who were the two men, "the two actors in the brief drama that conferred this unending importance to the river"? (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

Tempted to Test God. Professor Tyndall, in the interest of a scientific skepticism, once made a proposal to the religious world. He offered to subject the question of prayer's value to the test of experiment. He proposed to have two hospitals, each filled with sick people, the one the subject of prayer, the other not. If the one for which prayer was made turned out more convalescents than the other, it would be in favor of the Christian doctrine; if not, it would show the valuelessness of the whole process. Until I heard Professor Tyndall's proposal I never understood the full meaning of the second temptation recorded by Matthew. The cases are almost identical. The tempter says to Jesus: "You can put the power of your faith to the test of a public experiment. Throw yourself from the heights before the eyes of the crowd, and let them see whether God will or will not keep his promise." In both cases a negative result was expected. And it was right to expect such a result, but not on the ground that the promise to answer is a delusion: the truth is, neither the hospital test nor the pinnacle test gave room for any prayer at all. It was not prayer for Divine care, but an experiment on God. You can experiment with wireless telegraphy, without reference to the message, but not with prayer. The prayer "is" the message. Not the word, but the wish; not the sound, but the sympathy; not the kneeling, but the need, makes mine a prayer.—George Matheson.

Tempted by a Great Promise. Sadhu Sundar Singh is a Christian native of India. When a lad of sixteen he renounced the Sikh religion and openly professed Christianity. Every possible effort was made by his friends to win him back to their beliefs. One day his uncle, a very rich man, invited him to his beautiful home. Taking him down into the cellar the uncle opened a large safe and showed him priceless jewels and roll upon roll of bank notes—such as Sundar had never before seen. "All these shall be yours," vowed the uncle, "if you only will remain a Sikh." It was a great temptation, but Sundar put it from him.

How to Look at your Temptations. "If only I could see my temptations as I see other people's," said a girl the other day, "they wouldn't be a bit hard to fight. Other people's temptations look so ugly and mean and foolish. But my own temptations come with a rosy light about them, so that I don't see how hateful they are until afterwards." There are two ways to see temptations in their true colors. One is to pray about them, to bring them into the clear light of God's presence. The other is to say, "How would this look if some one else yielded to it?"—Forward.

Why a Boy Goes Wrong. A chaplain in a State Reform School gave the boys questionnaires at various times which they answered frankly. "Why did you go wrong?" received these replies: "Many temptations were too strong"; "There were more temptations to go wrong than to go right"; "Wrong got the better of me"; "I can't get over the fight going on in my heart by the right and wrong"; "I was told to do it by an unseen enemy"; "the devil got into me."

"The boys felt that they were up against too many and hard temptations," the chaplain commented. "The forces within were not able to stand against such temptations. They felt that it was an unequal contest. They were conscious of

a lack of moral stamina to meet the assaults against their wills. They plead guilty in a pathetic fashion."

What did those boys need?

How to Meet Temptation. From our earliest years we are brought under the power of temptation, though perhaps we don't think of it as temptation. Even young children know that there are some things they must not do, and yet we may sometimes see a power in them enticing them to do those forbidden things; and many a burn and many a cut they get as a consequence. This enticing power is what we mean by temptation; as the years pass this power becomes stronger. In our early years our parents and teachers shield us from the consequences of temptation and warn us of it. In our later years we have to meet it for ourselves, and the sooner we learn to face it and to fight it, the better for us.

We cannot escape temptation, do what we will. It will come in many places and in many ways, and at most unexpected moments. It finds its way into school life and into home life. It comes in such simple forms that we hardly recognize it as temptation. It is not always something critical like a theft or a lie; perhaps it is only an impulse to deceive our teacher or parents; it may be a feeling of jealousy at another's success; or a spirit of wilfulness and disobedience. These are all matters to be met and conquered; and if we do not meet and conquer them in school and home life how can we expect to meet and conquer the more critical temptations which come with later years?

Further, we cannot hope to overcome temptation unless we are prepared for it. We are prepared for it principally by possessing the Spirit of Christ in our hearts. Those who day by day in prayer seek from Christ the strength he can impart, know that there is not a temptation in all the world that they need fear.—Condensed from The Shattered Temple, by John Eames.

In that He Himself Hath Suffered Being Tempted, He is Able to Succor them that are Tempted. Here are three of us, brothers, straining up a mountain steep. The height up to victory is one hundred degrees. At fifty degrees my breaking point comes. My brother gasps on to seventy degrees and then fails. He can sympathize with me. He knows. But the elder brother panting beside us, trying to cheer us on, refuses to give in. The darkness is coming, but he struggles on. The sweat is pouring down. He is gasping for breath. But he keeps on. Through stress and pain he wins out. Can he not sympathize as much as the brother who has failed? He has suffered more than either of us. Do you see that?

And he has done what the other brother did not. He has shown me the possibility of winning. That is the cheering, inspiring lesson of the Temptation.

"O my poor dispirited, tempted brother," says the triumphant Jesus, "come on and win! For you can win. There is no reason why you should not. Try again in my strength. I have taken humanity to show what humanity can do. I fought beside you as a Man with no help that you have not—no help but simple faith in God. Mine was an infinitely harder fight than yours. And I won. And because I in the greater fight won, you in the lesser fight can win also."—J. Paterson Smyth, in Myself and Other Problems.

Sentence Sermons.

No one can ask honestly or hopefully to be delivered from temptation unless he has himself honestly and firmly determined to do the best he can to keep out of it.—Ruskin.

Did we in our own strength confide,
Our struggling would be losing,
Were not the right Man by our side,
The Man of God's own choosing.—Luther.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What was Simon's other name? 2. What is the meaning of the word "divers," 4.40? 3. Look up the law in regard to lepers to which the reference in the Bible in connection with 5.14 refers. 4. Why did Jesus charge the leper to tell no one of his cure? 5. Of what prophecy does Mt. 8.16, 17 say that Jesus' healing was a fulfilment? 6. What are some other instances recorded in the Gospels which show Jesus as the Great Physician?

LESSON V—FEBRUARY 1

JESUS THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

GOLDEN TEXT: Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. Isaiah 53.4

LESSON Luke 4.31 to 5.39 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 53.1-6

LUKE 4.38 And he rose up from the synagogue, and entered into the house of Simon. And Simon's wife's mother was holden with a great fever; and they besought him for her. 39 And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she rose up and ministered unto them.

40 And when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them. 41 And demons also came out from many, crying out, and saying, Thou art the Son of God. And rebuking them, he suffered them not to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.

42 And when it was day, he came out and went into a desert place: and the multitudes sought after him, and would have stayed him, that he should not go from them. 43 But he said unto them, I must preach the good tidings of the Kingdom of God to the other cities also: for therefore was I sent.

44 And he was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.

LUKE 5.12 And it came to pass, while he was in one of the cities, behold, a man full of leprosy: and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. 13 And he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou made clean. And straightway the leprosy departed from him. 14 And he charged him to tell no man: but go thy way, and show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. 15 But so much the more went abroad the report concerning him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed of their infirmities. 16 But he withdrew himself in the deserts, and prayed.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. Preaching at Nazareth, 4.14-30.

II. The Cure of a Demoniac, 4.31-37.

III. The Cure of Peter's Wife's Mother, 4.38, 39. Leaving the synagogue, where he had preached and had restored the demoniac to sanity, Jesus went to the house of Peter to find all greatly alarmed over the high fever of Peter's mother-in-law. They appealed to Jesus for help, and not in vain, for he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and she was so completely restored to health that she rose and ministered to them.

"It is never far from the synagogue of aspiration to the house of pain and need. The holy hands which are uplifted in prayer are speedily stretched forth in sympathetic effort. This movement of the Master, so simply recorded, was characteristic of his entire method. It is meant to be a Scripture written for our learning to be read, marked, learned and inwardly digested to the end that the same direct relation may obtain between our mood of worship and our impulse to serve" (Charles Reynolds Brown).

IV. The Cure of All Sorts and Conditions of Ailments, 4.40, 41. The fame of Jesus spread, and friends of the sick brought them to him, and were not disappointed, for he healed them all. How did he do it? We cannot explain it. Dean Brown does so partially: "He aimed to secure the coöperation of the expectant hope and confident trust of the patient. He worked in an atmosphere of sympathy and faith. When he found himself in an atmosphere of unbelief, 'he could do there no mighty work.' He added to that widely resident impulse toward recovery the power of his own wise, loving personality. And somehow these energies availed for the recovery of many from their natural ills. 'Violations of natural law?' Rather the addition of a higher force which altered the possibilities in that situation as men had sensed it!"

For the people of his day the important fact was their healing; for the world since that time the fact that matters is the proof his ministries give of his intensely sympathetic heart, his readiness to take upon himself the

burdens of suffering humanity. In that he himself was tempted, he is able now to help those that are tempted, was the comforting thought of last week's lesson; and just as true is it that in that he himself suffered because of the suffering of others, so is he able now to help the suffering.

Many who were possessed of demons Jesus freed. "Thou art the Son of God," the demons cried, and Jesus rebuked them, did not allow them to speak, "because they knew that he was the Christ," Luke adds. In Jesus' day several kinds of suffering, especially epilepsy and insanity, were termed cases of demon possession. There are two points of view held today in regard to Jesus' attitude toward these maladies: one is that he accommodated his speech to the beliefs of his day, spoke in terms that his hearers would understand and that would influence the man he wanted to cure; the other is that, like his contemporaries, he believed in demons and also believed in his power to drive them out.

"'Hast thou no medicine for a mind diseased? Canst raze the rooted sorrow from the brain?' asked Macbeth of the doctor. The doctor had no such remedy, but the Great Physician is always 'casting out the devils.' At an annual meeting of the British Medical Association a leading mental specialist said that he knew no more powerful and effective sedative and preventive of mental disorder than the habit of prayer" (H. Jeffs).

V. Preaching and Healing in Galilee, 4.42-44. When day came, Jesus went away to a lonely place for prayer (Mk. 1.35), but the multitudes followed him, and sought to prevent his leaving them. "I must preach the good tidings of the Kingdom of God to the other cities also," he declared, "for therefore was I sent." Did the demand upon his healing power present a very real temptation to Jesus? Did his sympathetic heart make him yearn to give all his time to the sick and afflicted? May he not have wrestled in prayer for strength to turn from the joy of healing to the far greater work of teaching, the work for which he was sent? The proclamation of the good tidings of the Kingdom of God was of infinitely greater importance than the healing of men's bodies, and, strengthened by prayer, Jesus left his clamoring crowd from Capernaum and went about Galilee, preaching in the synagogues.

"The sun is giving out all of itself to all the earth, but each plant and flower gets only what it takes; the grass takes green, the rose red, the oak its sturdy style, and the lily its beauty. The Master is giving all of himself out to each of us, but we get only what we take in or allow to come in" (S. D. Gordon).

VI. The Wonderful Draught of Fishes, 5.1-11.

VII. The Cure of a Leper, 5.12-16. One day a leper came and, falling on his face before Jesus in reverence, cried, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." The law in Leviticus declared a leper "unclean" and did not permit him to associate with the "clean." With infinite compassion Jesus touched the loathsome sufferer and said, "I will; be thou made clean," and immediately the leprosy left him. According to the law, the one who touched a leper was made "unclean." "If a leper even put his head into a place it became unclean. No less a distance than four cubits (six feet) had to be kept from the leper, or, if the wind came from his direction, one hundred cubits was scarcely sufficient." The Mosaic law allowed a priest to touch a leper, and Jesus by his act either claimed the authority of a priest or the greater authority of one superior to the law of Moses.

"As Sir Launfal made morn through the darksome gate,
He was 'ware of a leper, crouched by the same,
Who begged with his hand and moaned as he sate;
And a loathing over Sir Launfal came;
The sunshine went out of his soul with a thrill,
The flesh 'neath his armor 'gan shrink and crawl,
And midway its leap his heart stood still
Like a frozen waterfall;
For this man, so foul and bent of stature,
Rasped harshly against his dainty nature,
And seemed the one blot on the summer morn,—
So he tossed him a piece of gold in scorn" (Lowell).

Jesus bade the leper tell no one, (for he wished to avoid a popular demonstration at this time), but fulfill the Mosaic law by showing himself to the priest to secure his testimony to the cure, and make the offering required by law. The man did not obey the first command (Mk. 1.45) and when the fame of the miracle spread, the people, as Jesus had anticipated, came to him in such numbers to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities, that he was compelled to leave the town for a while. He withdrew for prayer to an uninhabited place.

VIII. The Cure of the Palsied Man, 5.17-26.

IX. The Call of Matthew, 5.27, 28.

X. Matthew's Feast and the Questions about Eating with Publicans and Sinners and about Fasting, 5.29-39.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Holden with a great fever, 4.38. This was a disease very common in that region. The Talmud calls it "the burning fever," and prescribes for it a magical remedy, of which the principal part is, we are told, "to tie a knife, wholly of iron, by a braid of hair to a thornbush, and to repeat, on successive days, Exodus 3.2, 3, then 4 and finally 5, after which the bush is to be cut down while a certain magical formula is pronounced."

Dean Charles R. Brown is right in declaring that the record of "materia medica" in that day reads like the receipt for some witch's broth:

"Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blind worm's sting,
Lizard's leg and owlet's wing."

Behold, a man full of leprosy, 5.12. The earliest effort made in Palestine to have those afflicted with leprosy confined to a definite quarter was when Emperor Frederick of Germany visited Jerusalem. At that time the village of lepers on Mount Zion near the Zion Gate was demolished and a building built for them near the southern extremity of the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

And he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, 5.13. "It is recorded of one rabbi that he would not eat eggs from a street where there was a leper; of another, that when he saw a leper he hid himself; of a third, that when he saw one he pelted him with stones."

A traveler in the far East writes that the average Oriental, when he sees a missionary ministering to the sufferers in a cholera epidemic and carefully handling them, explains the phenomenon by the theory that the missionary has committed some terrible crime and is trying to atone for it by performing these good deeds in order to save his own soul!

Cities around the Sea of Galilee

Read the account of the curing of lepers in Ben Hur, Eighth Book, Chapters III and IV.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Beginning with the curing of a demoniac in the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and continuing through the visit and cure at Peter's home, the many cures at evening, and the early departure the next morning to a desert place where the multitudes still followed him, we have the record of twenty-four hours of Jesus' life.

Peter's home was at Capernaum, the city which Jesus made his headquarters during his public ministry. It was near the northern end of the Sea of Galilee. Two places, Tel-Hum and Khan-Minyeh, are claimed today as its site. The

Sea of Galilee is six hundred and eighty-two feet below sea level, and the heat and marshes near the Jordan made malarial fevers common.

Canon Tristam observes that all the places where Jesus is said to have met lepers are in the central districts of Galilee and Samaria, where today colonies of lepers are still most numerous.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Of Alice Freeman Palmer it can truthfully be said that she went about doing good. Here is what she wrote to a friend about her influence among the students at Wellesley when she was their president:

"You ask how I work among the girls to gain influence. Let me talk to you about it. Looking on and into them, I said, I will try to be a friend to them all, and put all that is truest and sweetest, sunniest and strongest that I can gather into their lives. While I teach them solid knowledge, and give them real school drill as faithfully as I may, I will give, too, all that the years have brought to my own soul. God help me to give what he gave—myself—and make that self worth something to somebody; teach me to love all as he has loved, for the sake of the infinite possibilities locked up in every human soul.

"But Christianity meets the wants of every heart; only it takes experience, knowledge of and insight into human nature—but far more than anything else, the spirit of Christ himself—in order to know when and how to speak. Why, what is it to be a Christian, a Christ-follower, unless it is going about doing good? We ought to love everybody and make everybody love us. Then everything else is easy."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY TO PHYSICAL ILLS

Beginning the Lesson. Were we to judge the employment of Jesus by his recorded acts only, without reference to his words, remarks G. D. Boardman, we might in strictest propriety say that Jesus followed the medical profession, for out of forty-five specifically narrated miracles wrought by him, thirty-six were miracles of restoration from sickness and death, to say nothing of the vast number of his other cures, of which we have no specific record.

When Matthew (8.17) applied to Jesus the words of Isaiah which have been chosen for our Golden Text to-day, he evidently had two great truths in mind. First, that healing of disease was not an incidental work of Jesus, performed by a casual word and a wave of the hand, but that it was a work of love and pity, performed only by an outlay of strength, the strength that is used by one who sympathizes with another's distress, puts himself in the other's place, and thus "bears his diseases."

The other thought of Matthew was that infirmities and diseases are symbolical of sin, that in healing them Jesus showed his power to heal sin. In the words of Edersheim, "He must be blind indeed who sees not in this Physician the Divine Healer; in this Christ the Light of the World, the Restorer of what sin has blighted; the joy in our world's deep sorrow."

The Sympathy of Jesus. Sympathy to be effective must be the expression of power. To give, one must have. To give one's life a ransom for many is of no avail if the ransom be insufficient. To say that the Son of Man comes not to be ministered unto, but to minister, is to utter no great truth, unless the Son of Man has the capacity for ministering. To dig a channel for the water-power of one's mill is no wise investment if the stream has run low. The sympathy of Jesus is the channel through which his power flows, and the abundance of the stream testifies to the reserve power at the source.—Francis Greenwood Peabody, in Jesus Christ and the Christian Character.

If Thou Wilt, Thou Canst Make me Clean. This man apparently had no doubt of our Lord's ability to heal him: it was about Christ's willingness to heal him that he was in doubt. His coming to Jesus was an act of faith, but of incomplete faith,—a faith which, having grasped the truth of divine saving power, failed to grasp the collateral of divine saving love.

True faith grasps alike the power and the good will of God. The truth is laid down in the words of the writer to the Hebrews, on the nature of faith:

"He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him." The leper's faith represents that of thousands at the present day, who, without any doubt of God's ability to help them, are not convinced of his disposition to help them.

As a rule, men do not naturally associate love and power, and they believe in the existence of power more readily than in that of love. Your little child, for instance, places no limit to your power. He will ask you to do an impossible thing just as readily as he will ask you for a sugar-plum or a picture book. It does not enter his mind that there is anything his father can not do. On the other hand, there is no such tendency to exaggerate love. That child, familiar with love, brought up in its very atmosphere, compassed about with its tender ministrations,—that child, who believes in his father's power to perform the impossible, is skeptical about his father's disposition to pardon his fault, and will hide himself when he hears his father's step, and knows that his breaking of the vase or his upsetting of the inkstand will be found out.

Power, somehow, seems to create distrust in love. Now it is this which the God of the Bible, through all his administration, has been at work to overcome, and to get firmly lodged in men's hearts the conviction that God loves them, and is more willing to give good things to them that ask him than earthly parents are to give good gifts unto their children.—Condensed from God and Bread, by Marvin R. Vincent.

Prayer for Healing. Faith-cure is no fable, however foolish folk seem determined to make a "reductio ad absurdum" of it. The prayer for physical relief is subject to the same conditions as other prayer; no more, no less. The sufferer who pleads with Christ for help, recognizing his superior wisdom as well as his infinite love, is sure of a hearing. The answer may come as it came to Paul pleading for deliverance from his thorn, "My grace shall be sufficient for thee," or it may appear that one's sickness, like that of Lazarus, is "for the glory of God"; in which case, of course, the filial spirit as well as sound reason will evoke the response, "Thy will be done," for then

"Ill that God blesses is our good,
And unblest good is ill;
And all is right that seems most wrong,
If it be his dear will."

To insist upon the cure of every malady would obviously leave no room for any judgment but our own; and besides, if all such prayer were answered in accordance with the near-sighted petitioner's work and will, no one would ever die. Then, what a world this world of ours would be!

At this point we note that Christ never questioned the reality of pain. The Buddhists have a word, "maya," which is one of the keynotes of their religion. It means illusion. To their minds all sensation is unreal. Joy and grief, pain and pleasure, hope and disappointment, are as illusory as the shadow of a dream. There are people among us who profess to think the same way, affirming that pain is merely "an opinion of mortal mind." The fact that this gives the lie direct to the physical senses should be enough for the average man.—David James Burrell.

How a Great Missionary Gained Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Health. I saw that unless I got help from somewhere I would have to give up my missionary career, go back to America and go to work on a farm to try to regain my health. It was one of my darkest hours. At that time I was in a meeting at Lucknow. While in prayer, not particularly thinking about myself, a Voice seemed to say, "Are you yourself ready for this work to which I have called you?" I replied: "No, Lord, I am done for. I have reached the end of my rope." The Voice replied: "If you will turn that over to me and not worry about it, I will take care of it." I quickly answered, "Lord, I close the bargain right here." A great peace settled into my heart and pervaded me. I knew it was done! Life—abundant Life—had taken possession of me. I was so lifted up that I scarcely touched the road as I quietly walked home that night. Every inch was holy ground. For days after that I hardly knew I had a body. I went through the days, working all day and far into the night, and came down to bedtime wondering why in the world I should ever go to bed at all,

for there was not the slightest trace of tiredness of any kind. I seemed possessed by Life and Peace and Rest—by Christ himself.

Nine of the most strenuous years of my life have gone by since then, and the old trouble has never returned, and I have never had such health. But it was more than a physical Touch. I seemed to have tapped new Life for body, mind, and spirit. Life was on a permanently higher level. And I had done nothing but take it!

I suppose that this experience can be picked to pieces psychologically and explained. It does not matter. Life is bigger than processes and overflows them. Christ to me had become Life.—E. Stanley Jones, in The Christ of the Indian Road.

Christian Ministry to Physical Ills. There are those, like Nietszche, who say that Christianity is all wrong in being tender to the weak and that it is biologically bad to keep alive the inferiors of the race. Some think that we are inviting degeneracy by this process of expert care for the weak. Yet we always come back to that word: "We who are strong ought to bear the burdens of the weak." What is more beautiful than the loving care bestowed by children upon aged parents and relatives? Who would rob society of that unselfish note? Would not the world be poorer without this trait? Nietszche, himself, was not so hard. Drafted for war, he was sent home because he could not bear the sight of blood, even as a nurse. He had a girl-like sensitiveness and much of his hard talk is only talk. The world does not need to be taught selfishness, hardness and the will to personal power; there is too much of it already, a thousand times too much, that is what is wrong. Fear causes hate. Hate causes war. War breeds brutality. Brutality always is selfish, cruel and hard.

There is no reason why any man should seek to put aside scientific medicine. There is nothing on earth finer than a Christian physician. It has been my joy to know many of them and to work with them. A well educated doctor, who has had the advantages of a modern medical school and of hospital training, becomes almost a superman when he adds a positive Christian faith. There is a tenderness and firmness in his touch, a richness to his voice, a warm, healing love in his heart, which doubles the value of his skill and scientific knowledge. I prefer doctors to faith-healers, and I greatly prefer Christian to non-Christian doctors. When I say "Christian" I refer to the spirit which Jesus expressed, rather than a creedal test. I can easily conceive of a modern Jewish doctor, healing in the Master's spirit. This is the essential element.

Pastors and good people can do much to-day, in relating the sick to God. Prayer still is power. Prayer brings quiet confidence, peace, a sense of God's nearness, sympathy and power. Good doctors know the power of prayer and encourage it. After human skill has done its best, prayer leads us out into the infinite sources of energy and love.

It is wrong, in my judgment, to ignore or neglect the power of religious ministration. The two go together, one supplements the other.—John R. Ewers, in The Twentieth Century Quarterly.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. Should the Church be a healing Church? 2. Mental hygiene and religious education. Mental hygiene clinic in the church. Coöperation among clergymen, psychiatrists and social workers. See Religious Education for September 1929.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What effect will doing a kindness to one whom you dislike have upon your attitude toward him? 2. How are the counsels in verses 29 and 30 to be observed? 3. From whom will the reward promised in verse 35 come, and what will be its nature? 4. What is the sure reward of the generous man? 5. Explain the allusion in verse 38. 6. Can the Golden Rule be followed in business? 7. Among nations? 8. What would happen in your town if all Christians and all nominal Christians followed the standards of Jesus?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

OUR FRIEND AND HELPER

Beginning the Lesson. This is the story of a clinic in Capernaum nineteen hundred years ago. The man who tells the story was himself a physician who

had practiced in Antioch, after taking his degree under Hippocrates, the greatest of the ancient masters of the healing art. Here is the story as he tells it.

In this way a preacher in New York began a sermon, and the story he told is ours today. Who will tell it? (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

Lepers of Today. The leper missions of the Christian world are not few in number, and they represent the charity of many denominations. To these homes in India, China, Persia, Syria and the Hawaiian Islands have gone brave men and women, who have risked their lives that they might bring the sympathy of a Christian world to a class whose misery always appealed to the sympathy of Christ.

Travelers in the Orient say that it is difficult to maintain sympathy for the lepers. The unfortunate trade in their misfortune and the fear which it evokes. They await the traveler where the road ascends the hill to a city, and hobbling beside him, thrust their stumps of fingers into his face and shout their plaintive, querulous, insistent cry, "Lipra! Lipra!" The traveler flings a small coin behind him in the road, and while the lepers scramble for the money, hastens on, wondering that Christ could ever have pitied a leper.

The leper homes could tell many a story of disappointment and ingratitude, for the lepers chafe under restrictions, and often enter the homes only that they may have shelter in cold weather, and roam and beg when the weather is warm. But there are also tales of heroic self-denial, and of a gratitude that touches every heart that knows of it.

From one of these homes in Hiao-Kan, China, came, not long ago, a report of the recent death of an inmate who for years had been a blessing to the mission. When he knew that the time of his death was near, he asked permission to visit his old home, and, accepting the reluctantly granted permission, set out on his journey.

His limbs were diseased, his lungs were nearly destroyed, the sight of one eye was gone, but he made the journey, told his heathen friends of the joy which his religion afforded, took leave of them all, and returned to the mission at Hiao-Kan to die.

He had barely strength to get back, and when he arrived, lived but a few hours. His poor, thin, disease-ravaged face had a light which seemed the reflection of heaven, and he told of his three weeks' journey with a note of triumph. It had been a pilgrimage of faith, and the joy of his message had comforted every painful, limping step. He had borne his testimony to the faith that makes men strong to suffer and brave to die, and he was ready to be offered up.—The Youth's Companion.

Great Physicians of Our Times. The history of the Nineteenth Century has no finer stories to tell than those of the "good physicians" and surgeons who carried on a ceaseless and progressively victorious warfare against pain and death. There was Simpson of Edinburgh. He could not bear the spectacle of the excruciating torture of patients during operations, so he invented and applied the anæsthetic treatment under which the patient is blissfully unconscious while limbs are amputated, and skull or body is cut into for life-saving surgery, the very agony of which, in consciousness, might kill the patient.

At Edinburgh, also, Lister's heart was wrung at the enormous percentage of patients who died, not because of failure of an operation, but because of infection of the wound by germs of disease conveyed by the surgeon's hands or instruments, or the nurse's dressings. He invented the antiseptic method of surgery and reduced the death rate of surgical patients in hospitals to an almost negligible quantity.

In The Life of Pasteur, by his friend René Vallery-Radot, we have the story of a man who raged furiously in his soul at "useless suffering," at the horrid harvests of death from infectious diseases, at the haunting horror of hydrophobia. He set out to track to their lairs the obscure causes of diseases, and after twenty years of continuous experiment, he discovered the microbic nature of most diseases, hunted down the specific microbes, "cultured" them in suitable media, and found out how, by inoculation with attenuated viruses, the deadliest diseases could be checked or prevented. Millions of lives were saved during the Great War by the application of Pasteur's methods.

The Great Physician created the Red Cross, the hospitals, the physicians and surgeons who within the last century have fought with pluck and tenacity to make the world a beautiful place to live in.—H. Jeffs.

How Hospitals for the Sick Began in France. Messer Portinari, of Florence, Italy, gave one day a great feast in his beautiful palace. His eight-year-old daughter Beatrice was present, and helping in the work was a servant named Monna Tessa. All the world has heard of Beatrice, for Dante saw her at that feast, in her crimson dress and her jewels; her pretty face and kind voice made him think her "the youngest of the angels," and in his great poem he has immortalized her as the incarnation of all virtue. Do you know the name Monna Tessa? When her work was over she was accustomed to go out and care for God's poor in the hovels of Florence. As the huge palace was not all occupied she asked her master to let her have the use of two vacant rooms. Portinari consented, and when he went to them some time later he found them filled with sick paupers whom this servant woman was supporting out of her wages and caring for in her spare moments. "This is God's work and I will help you in it," he told her. He built a small hospital and put her in charge. To that beginning the poor of Florence have for centuries owed their care in sickness. On the wall of one of the largest hospitals there today, a successor of that first one, hangs a bas-relief of a homely, kind face in a servant's hood, but even the patients themselves do not all know that it is the face of Monna Tessa.

Do We "Belong" to the Needy? The other day a little Italian girl, poor and ragged, came to the door of one of the handsomest houses in our town. She wanted to see the lady who lived there, but poor, ignorant waif that she was, she did not know the name. She only knew that wherever sorrow and illness and poverty dwelt, there this gentle, beautiful woman came with help and sympathy, and that her time was freely given to any helpless one that needed her. So when the dignified manservant opened the door the little girl looked up at him and said:

"I want to see the lady that belongs to the poor."

Other friends of the mistress of that beautiful house speak of her as "belonging to one of the oldest families in the State," or as "belonging to the best society"; but I do not think she has ever valued these "belongings" as much as she did the simple tribute of the little Italian girl. And the child was right; it was not only alms that Mrs. M—— gave to the needy, it was her very self, her love, her sympathy, her wisdom, her best of everything; and even this little child recognized the sincerity and completeness of the gift.

Do we "belong to the poor," you and I? Do we "belong" to the suffering, or do we help them, so to speak, from the outside, with no real love to them, no real gift of ourselves at all? If we make this mistake, we shall lose a great blessedness out of our lives, for only as we belong to our brother man in loving service can we belong to the fellowship of the Master.—Priscilla Leonard.

Sentence Sermons.

Follow with reverent steps the great example
Of him whose holy work was "doing good";
So shall the wide earth seem our Father's temple,
Each loving life a psalm of gratitude.—Whittier.

Open the door of your heart, my friend,
Heedless of class or creed,
When you hear the cry of a brother's voice,
The sob of a child in need.
To the shining heaven that o'er you bends
You need no map or chart,
But only the love the Master gave.
Open the door of your heart.—E. E. Hale.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What do we call the discourse in which Matthew records these words of Jesus? 2. What did Jesus mean by bidding us "offer the other cheek"? 3. When did Jesus pray for those who despitefully used him? (Lk. 23.24.) 4. What do the words of verses 29 and 30 mean? 5. Can the Golden Rule be followed at home? 6. At school? 7. See what you can do this week which no one but a Christian would do.

LESSON VI—FEBRUARY 8

JESUS THE WORLD'S TEACHER

GOLDEN TEXT: As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. Luke 6.31

LESSON Luke 6 DEVOTIONAL READING Proverbs 3.13-18

LUKE 6.27 But I say unto you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, 28 bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you. 29 To him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and from him that taketh away thy cloak withhold not thy coat also. 30 Give to every one that asketh thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. 31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. 32 And if ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for even sinners love those that love them. 33 And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? for even sinners do the same. 34 And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? even sinners lend to sinners, to receive again as much. 35 But love your enemies, and do them good, and lend, never despairing; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be sons of the Most High: for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil. 36 Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful. 37 And judge not, and ye shall not be judged: and condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: release, and ye shall be released: 38 give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.

39 And he spake also a parable unto them, Can the blind guide the blind? shall they not both fall into a pit? 40 The disciple is not above his teacher: but every one when he is perfected shall be as his teacher. 41 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 42 Or how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me cast out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Son of Man Lord of the Sabbath, verses 1-11.

II. The Twelve Chosen, verses 12-16.

III. Jesus' Healing Ministry, verses 17-19.

IV. The Beatitudes, verses 20-23.

V. The Woes, verses 24-26.

VI. The Law of Love, verses 27-31. But I say unto you that hear: here Jesus turns from the worldlings upon whom he has been pronouncing his woes, to his followers, and counsels them to be ruled by love in their treatment of their enemies. The Greek word for "love" in our text is carefully chosen. It is not demanded that we should love our enemies with a natural and spontaneous affection ("philein"), but with a supernatural Christian love that comes by grace ("agapan")" (Expositor's Greek Testament). At the time when Jesus uttered these words, revenge wreaked upon an enemy was considered noble. How Cicero gloated over the misfortunes of an enemy; he thought himself fortunate on his death bed that he could say no one had done more good to his friends nor more mischief to his enemies!

Those that hate you, curse you, despitefully use you ("the three stages of enmity—feeling, speech, deed"), you must do good to, bless, pray for. "Deeds of kindness, words of blessing, and, highest of all and best help to fulfilling the other two, prayer, are to be our meek answer to evil" (Alexander Maclaren).

"It is easy enough to love those who are agreeable or obliging—what fly is not attracted by sugar and honey? But to love one who is cross, perverse, tiresome, is as unpleasant a process as chewing pills"—thus Francis de Sales expresses the common attitude toward one's fellow men. Nevertheless, the right attitude toward the unlovable is a real touchstone

of Christian character. The way to practice this virtue is to put ourselves in thought in the place of the one who tries us or treats us ill, and to see how we would wish him to treat us if we had his defects and misunderstandings.

We should love our enemies, but Dr. Shailer Matthews is right in saying that love for our enemies is not moral if it deadens our indignation against the crimes they perpetrate.

The precepts which follow in verse 29 illustrate in a striking, concrete way, another form of love, non-retaliation, Christ's rule of conduct in the face of wrongful treatment. "Resist not evil," he says: "to him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and from him that taketh away thy cloak withhold not thy coat also." One who is not a Christian stands stiffly on his rights; a Christian yields his rights and suffers unmerited treatment, endures a blow and offers the other cheek, prevents a lawsuit by yielding more than his opponent claims. That this counsel is to be observed in the spirit and not in the letter Christ's own conduct recorded in Jn. 18.22, 23, shows. "I venture to think that the ordinary reader, having a little humor in his composition, is not confused by these peculiarities in the teaching of Jesus," is the way Dr. James Stalker speaks of these precepts. "He perceives that what is described is an ideal; it is with direction in which every one's face is turned that the Teacher is concerned, rather than with the several steps of the journey; it is not to slaves of the letter he is addressing himself, but to lovers of the spirit. In short, it is the love of man he is teaching, not an array of new commandments intended to rival the endless traditions of the scribes."

"Nothing will do except righteousness; and no other conception of righteousness will do except Christ's conception of it. Attempt to reach righteousness in any way except that of Jesus, and you will find out your mistake" (Matthew Arnold).

Give to every one that asketh thee; and from him that taketh away thy cloak withhold not thy coat also. By these words Jesus inculcates the duty of generous giving. To rightly understand this and similar sayings of Jesus we must keep in mind that he was wont to use figures of speech which had a definite but not a literal meaning. It is not wise to give to every one who asks. If men of wealth carried out this injunction literally, all their money would soon be in the hands of the undeserving. How to give is explained by the Golden Rule which immediately follows: As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. Love is to guide one in giving. To give to every beggar would be as harmful to him as it would be vexatious and impoverishing to you. Your gifts and your loans are to be suited, not to the asker's wish, but to his welfare. An opportunity to earn money is far better for a man's welfare than a gift of money itself.

The following letter written by Lincoln to his brother aptly illustrates how this counsel of Jesus should be taken:

"Dear Johnson:—Your request for eighty dollars I do not think it best to comply with now. At the various times when I have helped you a little, you have said to me, 'We can get along very well now,' but in a very short time I find you in the same difficulty again. Now this can only happen by some defect in your conduct—what that defect is I think I know: you are not lazy, and still you are an idler. You are now in need of some ready money, and what I propose is that you should go to work, tooth and nail—for somebody who will give you money for it. And then to secure you a fair reward for your labor I now promise you that for every dollar you will between this and the first of May get for your labor I will then give you one other dollar. You have always been kind to me, and I do not mean to be unkind to you. On the contrary, if you will follow my advice you will find it to be worth more than eight times eighty dollars to you. Affectionately your brother, A. Lincoln."

With the Golden Rule compare the Chinese saying given in Light from Oriental Life, and note how much greater is the force of the former.

The Golden Rule requires the putting of oneself in the other's place. We do not serve others best by doing for them just what we with our circumstances and desires would wish done to us, but by doing for them

just what we think would be best for ourselves were we in their circumstances and actuated by their desires. The physician should do for his patient what he would have done to himself were he in that patient's place; the employer should treat his employee as he himself would wish to be treated were he in the employee's place. The principle involves more trouble than the mere doing of a kindness to another; it requires thought, the effort of putting oneself in that other's place to find out what would be the best for that one in his position. And the higher the demand that we make for our own best, truest good, the less danger will there be of our doing a thoughtlessly kind deed for another that is not for his highest good.

VII. The Goodness Expected of Christ's Followers, verses 31-35a. If you love them that love you, if you do good to them that do good to you, what kind of thanks have you, what kind of reward do you deserve? for even sinners love those that love them. Love given for love is only glorified selfishness. Show your love by unselfishness, by loving your enemies as well as your friends; by doing good to those who do evil to you as well as to those who treat you well; by lending to those from whom nothing will be received as well as to those who will return the favor. And the great argument is that even sinners do good to those that do good to them, lend to sinners expecting to receive as much in return. Of followers of Christ far more is expected.

"Giving good because one has received or hopes to receive it is far below the Christian standard. Giving for the sake of giving, loving not so as to be loved back, but without regard to being loved back, and with a wealth of love beyond any power of others to return—this is the real law of the gospel" (J. R. Miller).

VIII. Kindness and Mercifulness, verses 35b, 36. Do all these things—love your enemies, do them good, and lend, never despairing—and your reward shall be great—ye shall be sons of God, for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

"It is an attribute of God himself,
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice" (Shakespeare).

IX. Be Charitable in Judgment and Generous in Giving, verses 37, 38. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; and condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned; release, set free, a debtor or offender, and ye shall be released. These are general statements which are not to be taken without qualification. The example of Jesus himself shows when judging and condemning is a duty. See Mt. 18.15; 2 Tim. 4.2. Apply the Golden Rule, and judge others as you would that others should judge you.

"An otherwise beautiful character is often made almost repulsive by the single bad habit of censoriousness. It is one of the temptations of the good to indulge in harsh judgment of the faults of others. Cultivating a stern conscience merely for the sake of flaunting goodness is no more Christlike, and no more heart-enriching and satisfying, than giving to make a display with money."

Give and it shall be given unto you. Liberal giving and worldly prosperity often go hand in hand. Yet full barns and overflowing bins are quite as often lacking to the bountiful giver, for God's rewards do not always come in the small coin of earth. The sure recompense to the generous giver is spiritual. "The liberal soul shall be made fat." There is a profound principle here for the inner life. Wonderful is the enlargement of heart of the Christian who gives himself freely for others. Browning but amplifies Jesus' words in saying:

"A poor man served by thee shall make thee rich:
A sick man helped by thee shall make thee strong:
Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense
Of service that thou renderest."

Give and it shall be given unto you. Do you say that you cannot afford to give? Jesus says you cannot afford not to give. Luther knew this when he wrote to his wife: "Dear Katie, if we've no money, the silver cups will have to go; we must give, if we wish to have anything."

The reward will be generous—good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over. This is a figure of speech taken from the way grain was measured for the purchaser by the professional measurer.

Noticing one day a man in the outskirts of Jerusalem sitting cross-legged on the ground with a large measure before him, I stopped to see him shoveling wheat into it with his hands and often shaking the measure that the grain might settle and give room for more. When it was apparently full, he gave it a swift jerk and shook it again, and the grain settled still more. When this method of procedure no longer brought results, he pressed the grain down with both hands, and then heaped it up in a cone until it ran over the sides. Not till then was it good measure, ready to be poured into "the bosom" —the pouch formed by the folds of the long Eastern garment which is fastened by the girdle.

For with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

"In the coin ye pay ye shall be repaid,
When your wages at last fall due."

X. The Duty of Self-Knowledge, verses 39-42.

XI. The Sin of Unkindly Judgments, 39-45. It is difficult to see the connection of verses 39 and 40 with the rest of the discourse; but perhaps we shall not err in connecting it with the "judge not and ye shall not be judged" of verse 37. He who, unconscious of his own faults, judges others hastily cannot help others; he is like a blind man leading another blind man, till both come to grief; or like one in whose eye there is a beam trying to cast out a mote from another's eye. His own beam must be cast out before the critic can see clearly to cast out the mote in his brother's eye. "The words of verse 40 may be taken as directed against the conceit of scholars presuming to criticize their teachers, which is checked by the reminder that the utmost height that can be reached by the fully equipped scholar is to be on the level with his teacher."

XII. The Tree and its Fruits, verses 43-45.

XIII. The Parable of the Two Foundations, verses 46-49.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, verse 27. This had been distinctly the spirit of the larger part of the Law and the Old Testament. Ex. 23.4: If thou meet thine enemy's ox or ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. Prov. 25.21: If thine enemy hunger, give him bread to eat. Yet in many passages it had been practically said, "Thou shalt hate thine enemy": Dt. 7.2; 23.6; 1 Cor. 20.3; 2 S. 12.31; Ps. 137.8, 9. On these passages the fierce fanaticism of the Pharisaic Jews after the Exile had so excessively fed, that we find the Talmud ringing with precepts of hatred the most bitter against all Gentiles, and the ancients had, not unnaturally, been led to the conclusion that detestation of all but Jews was a part of the Jewish religion.—F. W. Farrar.

From him that taketh away thy cloak withhold not thy coat also, verse 24. In Palestine the universal and indispensable garments were two: first, the "chetoneth," the inner vest or shirt, rather unfortunately rendered in our version "coat." This was a long, loose garment, generally without sleeves, and reaching to the knees or ankles. It was retained at night. Over this during the day was worn the "me'il," rendered "cloak" in our version, answering to our coat, which had loose sleeves, and was larger than the shirt. This was usually, especially when traveling, fastened around the waist by a girdle, the folds of which were used as pockets for carrying small articles. The "me'il" was also used at night as a blanket, thrown over the sleeper; hence the command in the law of Moses that the (outer) garment taken in

pledge was to be restored to the owner in the evening, for he did not require it while working in the day, but needed it as a covering at night.—Tristram.

And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise, verse 31. The One Volume Commentary gives the following sayings as parallels to this one:

Once a would-be proselyte went to Rabbi Hillel and demanded to be taught the whole Law while he stood upon one leg. The good rabbi said: "What is hateful to thyself, that do not thou to another. This is the whole law, the rest is commentary, Go, thou art perfect." The pious Tobias thus instructs his son Tobit (Tob. 4.15): "What thou thyself hatest, do thou to no man." The Chinese sage Confucius is reported to have said, "Do not to others what you would not wish done to yourself." All these are noble sayings, but they fall far short of Christ's Golden Rule, which means, not only avoid injuring your neighbor, but do him all the good you can. The others simply forbid injuries: Christ commands active benevolence.

Shall men give into your bosom, 6.38. The Chinese, Japanese, and Loochooan costume consists of a number of long robes similar to nightgowns, which overlap in front and are secured by a girdle at the waist. One of the gowns is fashioned and used extensively to carry articles. These capacious receptacles often hoard writing materials, tobacco, pipe and pouch, and numerous other commodities, without inconveniencing the wearer. The ancient Greeks and Hebrews were also accustomed to carrying articles in this manner. And it is the marvel of the careful observer that they are able to appear so well in such uncomely garments.—Rabbi Julius J. Price, in Expository Times.

With what measure ye mete, verse 38. One of the characteristic sights of Palestine after the harvest has been gathered in is the measuring out of wheat and barley, which sometimes takes place in the corn market but more frequently in the courtyard of the purchaser's house. A professional measurer is always present on these occasions, and in the presence of the seller and buyer or their representatives, duly proceeds to ascertain the contents of each sack. This is done by measuring out the grain in a circular wooden measure in the shape of our own bushel measure, but less deep, called in Arabic a "timneh." The measurer seats himself cross-legged on the ground and proceeds to shovel the wheat or barley into the "timneh" with both hands until it is partly full. Next he seizes the measure with both his hands and shakes it strongly from side to side by means of two or three rapid half turns without raising it from the ground, in order that the grain may settle into a smaller space. He then fills it further and repeats the shaking from side to side, going over the same thing over and over again till it is full up to the brim. As soon as this is the case he gently but firmly presses upon it with his hands so as to drive it into a yet smaller space. Finally, having first made a slight hollow on the top, he takes out some more handfuls of grain and very skillfully constructs a cone of corn upon the flat surface of the "timneh" until no more grain can possibly be held and that which he adds begins to flow over and run down. Upon this the measure is considered to be full weight and it is emptied into the purchaser's sack.—James Neil, in Palestine Explored.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

In Matthew's Gospel the appointment of The Twelve is followed by Christ's "Ordination Address," to which Augustine was the first to give the title of "The Sermon on the Mount," a title which had come into general use by the time of the Reformation. In Luke 6.20-49, Luke gives an abridgment of the Sermon as given in Matthew. Scattered throughout Luke's Gospel are thirty-four other verses which correspond to verses given by Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus may have spoken the same words more than once, or Matthew may have grouped into one discourse words that were uttered on different occasions.

The address given by Luke begins with four Beatitudes on the poor, the hungry, the sad, the hated (20-23); and then pronounces four woes on the rich, the satisfied, the glad, the well-spoken-of (24-26); then comes the exhortation of our lesson (27-38); the exhortation to severe self-examination

on the part of those who lead others lest they themselves be found to be hypocrites (39-45); and concludes with an exhortation to obey his words, illustrated by the parable of the Two Foundations (46-49).

Tradition says that the Sermon on the Mount was given from Kurn Hattin, or the Horns of Hattin, a hill about five miles west of the Sea of Galilee.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

The last two decades have been marked by great emphasis upon better teaching and a better understanding of the child. So much has this been true that ever and again we have heard the warning sounded that an overemphasis is being placed on methodology to the exclusion of the basic content which must constitute the teacher's message.

The time has come to sound a new note. The greatest need of church school teachers today is for a more thorough understanding and deeper appreciation of the content and message of the religion which they teach; it is for a living faith in that religion which will compel them to observe the Master's command "Go . . . teach!" This does not imply that we desire to take a step backward in effective method in teaching. It is simply a recognition of the fact that method is but a way of working. It derives its significance from the task to be done, and the materials with which it is to be done. If the greatest forward step in religious education is to be taken in the next few years, let there be a wholesome emphasis in our schools of leadership training on courses and other activities which will lead to an enrichment of the personal religious life of the teacher.—The International Journal of Religious Education.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

ACCEPTING THE STANDARDS OF JESUS

Beginning the Lesson. In one of Samuel McChord Crothers' thought-provoking essays he compares our Christian professions to a polished brass poker which stands by the fireplace. The poker shines beautifully in its stand, but it serves no useful purpose. When we actually want to do anything to the fire, we reach around the corner and take hold of a dirty, crooked poker and stir the fire into a blaze. In like manner, he thinks, we keep our Christian principles highly polished, but when we need to get anything actually done, we all too frequently employ some more convenient tools covered with the soot of the dirty world.

Is he right? The Sermon on the Mount is full of beautifully polished Christian principles. Are they not workable? Can they not be used in everyday life? Are the love of enemies, the spirit of non-retaliation, the doing of good without expectation of return, mercifulness, a non-censorious spirit, generosity, the Golden Rule—are all these principles of conduct beautiful to look at and talk about, but inoperative in daily life?

A Christian Character Worthy of the Name. "To do more and better than one might reasonably be expected to do—that, after all, seems very much like the idealism that the Christian teaching is continually setting forth. And if a Christian man should succeed, not only in not disappointing the community of its fair and reasonable expectations of how he should live, but should actually surprise it by exceeding its expectations by being kinder and more unselfish and more broadminded and more loyal to the best and truest things, what a commendation it would give to the name which he professes!

"Is it not true that much of the failure in our efforts to live the Christian life and really to adorn the doctrines that we profess is due to the miserable little standards that we set ourselves? To self-consciously set oneself to be a great Christian would be a very stupid and hopeless business indeed, but to place before oneself the highest and the finest ideals and to cherish a noble disappointment if they are not attained unto after some reasonable fashion, is the only way to any Christian character worthy of the name."

Keeping Up to the Standard. In his declining years, when his eyesight was beginning to fail, Michael Angelo was in the habit of regularly visiting a sculpture gallery. There was a marble torso—the broken remains of a human

figure from the hands of one of the greatest sculptors of the past—before which he would stand long with eyes closed, while he rubbed the tips of his fingers up and down over its surface. In this way he was keeping before his mind the standard toward which he was striving, each time mentally judging his own work by comparing it with that perfect work. And then with that example of perfect beauty fixed in his soul, he would hasten back to his studio, take up his tools, and with renewed purpose and encouragement do his best to attain to a like perfection in his art.

So we need to remain long in quiet thought before the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, which present to us the sort of Christian which he would have us be, and then go and live our life as nearly as possible in accordance with the standard he has set before us.

Love your Enemies, Do them Good; Be Merciful; and Judge Not. Self-denying service is in some of our relationships happily spontaneous. Outside the area of intimate friendships, however, there are wide stretches of human relations where tender affection does not apply. There are vulgar people from whom we shrink, bestial people who are repellent to us, unfriendly people whose unkindness we resent. There are racial boundaries across which affectionate relationships do not easily pass; cultural boundaries where, in spite of ourselves, our theoretical brotherhood encounters practical difficulties. Moreover, there are criminally-minded people, cruel and conscienceless, whose depredations on society must be hated and withstood. In a word, there are multitudes of people whom we do not like. But we can love them and do them good.

The principle of retaliation, of tit for tat, makes too small business for a real life to be preoccupied about. To go through life slapping back each time one is slapped, is the cheapest form of wasting life. After Appomattox, when Robert E. Lee was President of Washington College, a professor derided Grant harshly in Lee's presence. In swift indignation Lee thundered: "Sir, if ever I hear you speak again disrespectfully of General Grant, either you or I will sever connection with this institution." A man in earnest about serious tasks has no time for vindictiveness. Retaliation is the rule of little men; retaliation makes little men. Large spirits always are magnanimous. They even love their enemies and do them good.

John Wesley tells us of a man against whom year after year his choler rose. He thought of him contemptuously as covetous. One day when he gave to one of Wesley's favorite philanthropies a gift that seemed too small, Wesley's indignation burst all bounds, and he raked him fore and aft with scathing condemnation. Wesley tells us in his diary that the man quietly said: "I know a man who at the week's beginning goes to the market and buys a penny's worth of parsnips and takes them home to boil in water, and all that week he has the parsnips for his meat and the water for his drink; and meat and drink alike cost him a penny a week." "Who is the man?" asked Wesley. "I am," was the reply. And Wesley adds: "This he constantly did, although he had two hundred pounds a year, that he might pay the debts he had contracted before he knew God. And this was the man that I had thought to be covetous." We cannot be just to any one whom we do not understand.—Condensed and rearranged from The Meaning of Service, by Harry Emerson Fosdick.

The Golden Rule. Put yourself in the other man's place, then do to him as you would be done by; make your interest in him equal to your interest in yourself, your concern for him great as your concern for yourself; make your love for yourself the test of your love for your neighbor. How it would change the world if we felt our neighbor's poverty as we feel our own; if we respected his desires as we respect our own, and in every problem made him a term of equal value with ourselves! Then we should have the test and the driving power to make brotherhood real and lift the whole of humanity, bound together by the golden chains of the Golden Rule, up to God.

Life is not a circle with one's self for the center; it is not a circle with one's neighbor for the center; it is like an ellipse, drawn around both one's self and one's neighbor, each equal, and the ellipse containing both.

We are far enough from perfect obedience to the great law of the Golden Rule, but all obeying it brings us nearer a better world. Just as there is in

every mountain range one peak above all the rest, so in the range of Christ's teachings this is the highest peak of all; the goal upon which all our roads of life and action should converge.—Gaius Glenn Atkins, in The Sunday School World.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. The practicability of the Christian life. See Chapter I of The Christian Life in the Modern World, by F. G. Peabody.

2. The difference between easygoing good nature and genuine good will. "Beware the fury of a patient man" is good psychology. A good-natured man often accumulates offenses, and because he has borne much feels sure that his final resentment is justified.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How were women regarded in Jesus' day? 2. Is there any reason for supposing that Mary of Bethany or Mary Magdalene and this woman were the same? 3. On what false inference does the term Magdalene, for the fallen woman, rest? 4. Explain verse 47. 5. How does the story of Jean Valjean, in Les Miserables, illustrate this lesson? 6. Has the world changed in its attitude toward the sinner?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

LIVING BY THE GOLDEN RULE

Beginning the Lesson. Dr. Samuel M. Zwemer, in his book on the Moslem World, speaks of having seen an old Moslem diligently marking his copy of the New Testament, of asking him what he was marking, and of receiving the reply, "I am marking the places where I find teachings of Jesus that are not observed by his followers." There were a large number of sections marked!

How would our New Testaments look if we marked them in this way? How would Luke 6.27-42 look if we marked the precepts there which we do not perfectly observe? Let us take them up one by one with this thought in mind. (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

She Offered the Other Cheek. To him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other. It would be easy enough for most persons to obey this counsel literally, for very few are ever struck on the cheek. Of course Jesus did not mean to do just this very thing; he used it as an illustration of his thought that one should endure a wrong rather than try to "get even" by doing a wrong in return.

An old woman who was carrying a heavy basket of apples "turned the other cheek" in the way that Jesus meant when a man struck her basket and sent the apples rolling about the walk in every direction. He thought it would be fun to hear her calling him all sorts of names, and stood by with his hands in his pockets while she silently gathered up her fruit. But when at last she looked him in the eye and said, "God forgive you, my boy, as I do," he was speechless with surprise. Then he hastily fumbled in his pockets and, thrusting upon her all the money he had, exclaimed, "Take it. I'll never do such a thing again."

Return Good for Evil. It seldom pays to answer harshness with harshness. The person who speaks unkindly to us feels unkindly. He is sick or tired or unhappy or worried; or possibly some one has spoken unkindly to him. He needs to be, not roused, but calmed. To give a hard answer to a wrathful person is the height of folly. But "a soft answer turneth away wrath."

We were visiting a gigantic sawmill in Wisconsin. One of the filers took a large saw and, laying it on the bench, pushed it toward a grindstone. After he had finished grinding it he said:

"This saw is made of uncommonly hard steel, yet the grindstone I used is one of the softest in the entire mill. The atoms in hard steel are so compact that the surface is very smooth; you can find almost no inequalities in the surface of a hard steel, and you can see what will happen—plenty of scratching and screeching, but no effective contact. The two hard surfaces repel each other. The hard saw of hard steel that is laid on a hard grindstone comes off imperfectly sharpened. But when the hard saw is laid on the soft stone the rubbing of the soft particles of stone against the hard metal breaks down the even surface and produces the edges necessary for sawing wood."

Almost daily the chance comes to us either to answer hardness with hardness or to defeat hardness by means of a soft answer. Instinctively we tend to pay folks back in their own coin, but the teaching of Christ is to rise above instinct and to return good for evil. The soft stone is most effective against the hard steel.—The Youth's Companion.

The Golden Rule as Some People Practice it. It was a rainy day and two little children were playing indoors. "Let's play church," said Theodore, and Florence assented. "Now, I'll be the minister," Theodore explained, "and tell you what you must do, and you'll be the people, and you must listen and do what I tell you." He climbed into a chair and began: "Florence, you must be a very good girl, and do whatever your brother wants you to. If he wants your playthings, you must let him have them, and if you want any of his, you must let 'em alone. If he strikes you, you must forgive him. If you strike him, he will tell mother and she will punish you."

Isn't this about the way some older boys and girls seem to feel? What does the Golden Rule say? Can that rule be carried out in our daily lives?

How a Scot Practiced the Golden Rule. "You have some wheat to sell?" said the miller to Macalpin.

"I have three thousand bushels," replied the settler.

The miller's eyes narrowed; then he made Macalpin an offer for his wheat that made the thrifty Scot stare. "Why, man," he exclaimed, "at such a price you could make no profit grinding that wheat into flour! What have ye in mind?"

"Selling it for seed grain," replied the miller coolly, for he thought he was sure of his man.

A vision swept before the mind of Macalpin. Misfortune had overtaken the settlement. Early frosts the year before had killed all the grain, and the last that his neighbors had had from the years before had long since gone to keep them and a few cattle alive. They looked into the future with dismay. Macalpin, because he had farmed more extensively and had sturdy sons to help him, had grain stored away from previous years when prices were low and he had refused to sell his wheat at a loss. Now the miller was offering him money beyond his dreams! But in his vision Macalpin saw the cold-hearted man going among his struggling neighbors menaced by famine and extorting money from them, and the cold sweat came out upon his brow. He would not sell his wheat to this man!

The next Sabbath morning, dressed in his best, Macalpin took his stand early by the gate of the little kirk on the hillside, and as each fellow churchman and neighbor passed he whispered to him: "You can get seed grain at my place, measure for measure. For each bushel you take at seed time you can bring me a bushel after harvest."

After doing that for the members of his own congregation, he sent his sons off to other churches in the neighborhood to make the same offer.

Early the next day a procession of men with bags on their backs, men on horseback, men on oxen, and men in wagons, came in at Macalpin's gate. Not one was denied.

"You're all alike to me to-day," said Macalpin. "Bushel for bushel it shall be. What you take at seed time restore me bushel for bushel after harvest."

His sons measured out the precious grain and filled the bags and boxes of their neighbors. For three days the work of distribution went on until every man in the neighborhood was provided with seed grain. The act of the great-souled Macalpin saved the settlement, and the deed is held to this day as a treasured remembrance.—The Youth's Companion.

Judge not, and ye Shall not Be Judged. When Jesus spoke that parable about the motes and beam he meant that there were many people going about the world picking faults in others, and all the time they were quite unconscious of their own much greater faults. The very fact that they were looking out for other people's faults made them blind to their own.

I am going to tell you some reasons why we should not find fault with others. And the first is—we are not perfect ourselves. The Indians have a proverb—"Said the sieve to the needle, 'You have a hole in you.'" Just fancy the sieve, riddled with holes, having the impertinence to criticize the needle!

Make sure you are not the sieve and the other boy or girl the needle. It's just a case of the mote and beam over again, or the pot calling the kettle black.

The second reason why we should not find fault is that we do not know enough to judge. Once, among a great crowd of people in a French town, a man named La Motte trod upon another man's foot. The man who had been hurt turned round quickly and aimed a violent blow at La Motte's head. But La Motte said quietly, "Sir, you will surely be sorry for what you have done when you know that I am blind." The man reddened with shame. He had taken La Motte to be a rough, rude fellow. He had judged without knowing, and his judgment had led him to do a mean act.

We may be making just the same kind of mistake about other people. We may be seeing faults in them that they haven't at all. It is very easy to do so.

In the third place, fault-finding does an infinite amount of harm—to others and to ourselves. It leaves stains on our own character. We cannot judge others without becoming a little harder, a little more unkind. It spoils our eyesight until we are able to see only the ugly things about people.—From a Sermon in The Expository Times.

What Is your Standard? There is no sense in saying a thing is as big as a bit of wood, or as long as a piece of string; for a bit of wood may be of any size and a piece of string of any length. We must have a standard—something fixed and definite with which we can compare anything that we want to measure. On a wall at Greenwich Observatory a metal rod has been placed which is exactly a yard long, and which is so made that it does not become longer on a hot day nor shorter on a cold day, as most metals do.

Long before men used the yard standard, they measured everything by themselves. This was the easiest and most natural way for them to describe the size of anything. We have now a foot rule. It has to be a large "foot" to measure twelve inches, but of course that is how the foot measurement began—a thing was a foot long when it was about the length of a man's foot. We still measure the height of horses by "hands," the hand being four inches, that is, about the width of the palm of the hand. In the Old Testament you often read about "cubits." A cubit was the length of the forearm, from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger.

You can easily see one disadvantage in taking parts of our bodies as standards to measure by. We are not all the same size. That was the difficulty, and for a time people solved it by saying that the king should be the standard size, and that the "ell" should be the length of the king's arm. But only for a time: for the next king might be several sizes larger or smaller.

Really it is not satisfactory to measure things by ourselves or by one another. When you hear a boy saying, "Well, I'm as good as he is, anyway," you feel that there is something wrong about his way of measuring himself, even if you cannot see at once what is the right way. To compare ourselves with other people, and feel satisfied if we are no worse than they are, and proud if we are a little bit better—that is taking an unsatisfactory standard, and that will not help us to grow. Jesus gives us a better one. "Measure yourself by God," he says. If you want to know how big you are, compare yourself with God. If you want to measure your character put it side by side with God's. If you want to know how good you ought to be, look at God. "Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful." "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."—Ernest G. Loosby.

Sentence Sermons. God expects great things of you; take care that you do not disappoint him.—Howard Duffield.

O Lord and Master of us all,
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own thy sway, we hear thy call,
We test our lives by thine!—Whittier.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why, do you suppose, did Simon invite Jesus to his house? 2. What did his treatment of Jesus as his Guest show as to the way in which he regarded him? 3. What is the source of true courtesy? 4. On what other occasion and by whom was Jesus anointed by a woman? (Jn. 12.1-8.) 5. How much were the five hundred shillings worth? (See the footnote of your Bible.)

LESSON VII—FEBRUARY 15

JESUS THE FRIEND OF SINNERS

GOLDEN TEXT: Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. 1 Timothy 1.15

LESSON Luke 7 DEVOTIONAL READING Romans 5.1-8

LUKE 7.36 And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he entered into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. 37 And behold, a woman who was in the city, a sinner; and when she knew that he was sitting at meat in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster cruse of ointment, 38 and standing behind at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. 39 Now when the Pharisee that had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, that she is a sinner. 40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Teacher, say on. 41 A certain lender had two debtors: the one owed five hundred shillings, and the other fifty. 42 When they had not "wherewith" to pay, he forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him most? 43 Simon answered and said, He, I suppose, to whom he forgave the most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. 44 And turning to the woman, he said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath wetted my feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. 45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but she, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. 46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but she hath anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, "the same" loveth little. 48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. 49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that even forgiveth sins? 50 And he said unto the woman. Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Centurion's Faith and Reward, verses 1-10.

II. The Widow of Nain's Son, verses 11-17.

III. The Baptist's Deputation, verses 18-23.

IV. The Baptist Praised, verses 24-35.

V. The Sinful Woman's Deed, verses 36-38. One day Simon the Pharisee invited Jesus to dine with him, and seemed to think this honor enough for the carpenter's Son, for he failed to show him the civilities due an honored guest. "We are still in that epoch of transition when the rupture between our Lord and the Pharisees, although already far advanced, was not yet complete. A Pharisee could still invite him without difficulty. It has been supposed that this invitation was given with a hostile intention. But this Pharisee's own reflection, verse 39, shows he was hesitating between the holy impression which Jesus made upon him and the antipathy which his caste felt against him" (Godet).

During the meal a woman of the city, a sinner, entered uninvited, with an alabaster cruse of ointment. See Light from Oriental Life. Jesus was reclining on a couch in the customary manner at a feast, his head toward the table before him and his bare feet stretched out behind him, his sandals having been removed. The woman approached and stood behind him. Was it to lay bare her soul, to tell him of her self-abasement, her penitence, devotion, and love? By no means. As far as we know, she spoke not a word, but let her deed show her gratitude for the forgiveness she had already received, or was confident she would receive. She wet his feet with her tears, wiped them with her hair, kissed them, and anointed them with precious ointment. "To appreciate this act, we must remember that it was one of the greatest humiliations for a woman to be seen with her hair disheveled. Similar acts of respect were sometimes, but rarely, paid to rabbis. A man once came to kiss the feet

of Rabbi Jonathan, because he had induced filial reverence in his son. Anointing the feet was common among the Greeks, especially at banquets" (One Volume Commentary).

VI. The Pharisee's Criticism, verse 39. Simon was scandalized at the woman's act and the Lord's acceptance of it. Evidently Jesus was no prophet, Simon said to himself, or he would have detected the truth about the woman and would have scorned her.

"We have here a twofold reception of Christ: the reception of the Pharisee, or the reception of Christ into the house; the reception of the woman, or the reception of Christ into the heart. The Master is similarly treated to-day."

VII. The Pharisee's Lesson, verses 40-46. At once Jesus showed Simon that he not only knew the woman's history but that he even read Simon's thoughts. "Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee," thus Jesus arrested his attention. And then he told him his parable of the Two Debtors: one of them owed five hundred shillings and the other fifty shillings, but as neither of them had wherewith to pay, the lender forgave them both. "Which of them, therefore, will love him most?" Jesus questioned, and Simon answered, contemptuously perhaps, carelessly certainly, with no thought of the bearing of the question, "He, I suppose, to whom he forgave the most." "Thou hast rightly judged," Jesus said, and then turning toward the woman he questioned, "Seest thou this woman?"

"Having asked the question, he proceeded to help Simon see her. The difference between Simon's attitude toward her and that of the Lord is, that while Simon was not looking at her, the Lord was doing so. Simon was judging her by her past. Jesus was judging her by her present. Are we not all in danger of Simon's mistake? It is not easy for us to blot out a past, and to free ourselves from the prejudice resulting from our knowledge of the past. Yet that is exactly what the Lord does" (G. Campbell Morgan).

Then Jesus reminded Simon of his omission of the customary acts of courtesy due a guest—the water for his feet, the kiss of greeting, the oil for anointing—and contrasted therewith the lavishness of the woman's offerings. It was evident that, unlike the woman, Simon had no consciousness of sin at all and no repentance, or he would have shown greater love.

"An interesting point in the social life of Jesus is his courtesy. There is, perhaps, no part of our life that is so unreal and unsatisfactory, none of which we find it so hard to give an account to ourselves, as the courtesy which we pay to one another. I find the secret of the courtesy of Jesus in the clear perception and value of the personal life behind the class condition" (Phillips Brooks).

VIII. The Relation of Forgiveness and Love, verses 47, 48. "Wherefore I say unto thee [note that Jesus is here explaining the reason for his "saying" that the woman is forgiven, and not the reason for the forgiving], her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much." There are two possible interpretations of these words. One is that her love won the forgiveness. This was Coleridge's thought when he wrote:

"She sat and wept, and with her untressed hair
Still wiped the feet she was so blest to touch;
And he wiped off the soiling of despair
From her sweet soul, because she loved so much."

Dr. Plummer points out that this interpretation is at variance with the parable which precedes, and with verse 50, which states that it was faith, not love, which had been the means of salvation. Dr. C. R. Erdman puts the right interpretation plainly:

"Jesus did not mean to say that until now she had not been pardoned, nor yet that her pardon was conditioned upon her love. He meant that her love resulted from her pardon, and his words have been rightfully interpreted thus: 'I say unto thee that her many sins are forgiven, as thou mayest infer

from the exhibition of her love.' The remainder of that sentence was devoted to Simon, 'To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.' The words do not prove that Simon had been pardoned: they rather indicate that his lack of love had proved his lack of penitence and so of forgiveness. Jesus then turned to the woman with a word of benediction, 'Thy sins are forgiven.' He thus assured her of the pardon previously granted, but still more he vindicated her in the eyes of the guests and assured them of the new life upon which the woman had already entered. They marveled as they heard him pronouncing pardon. This is a divine function; but the ideal Man whose sympathy Luke records was likewise the Son of God. Last of all Jesus turned to the woman with the final word of blessing: 'Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.' This is a clear statement that faith had secured pardon and pardon had awakened gratitude and gratitude had been expressed by a deed of devoted love. Such a penitent can rightfully go away 'into peace,' that is, to its present and continual enjoyment."

"Much forgiveness, much love: is this in accordance with the psychological probabilities or with the facts of history? We cannot hesitate to answer in the affirmative. It is indeed the case that a great sinner repenting is likely to become, generally does become, a great saint. The rationale of this is simple. A great sinner, penitent and forgiven, will love much. He will be characterized by great devotion to Christ the Redeemer. But devotion to Christ is the cardinal Christian virtue, the mother of all the virtues. Again, a great sinner means a man of much misdirected energy, full of passion and life force. When he is converted he does not lose his energy. The driving power remains. All that takes place in conversion is that the power receives a new direction, and is utilized for new purposes. Made free from sin it becomes the servant of righteousness, and in this service gains distinction equal to its former bad notoriety as the servant of evil" (A. B. Bruce).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Behold, a woman, verse 37. The Pharisee, when he became conscious that he was in the neighborhood of a woman, turned away from her as if the mere sight of womankind were defiling. But Christ's bearing toward woman was courteous, kind and cordial to a degree that was sometimes surprising to those who were closely associated with him. The sisters in Bethany were his intimate friends; the society of disciples that gathered around his person and followed him in his wanderings embraced in its membership many women; he did not shun even women of evil repute, though Pharisaic critics drew sinister inferences, and even his chosen companions marveled. It was the behavior of One in whom the one master passion was gracious, redeeming love, and who in this quiet way was inaugurating a social revolution.—A. B. Bruce, in The Miraculous Element in the Gospels.

Ewer and Basin

When she knew that he was sitting at meat in the Pharisee's house, verse 37. In some points of domestic life, the Oriental maintains much greater privacy

than we do; in others, where we avoid publicity, he courts it. An ordinary entertainment is a public affair. The gateway of the court and the door or curtains of the guest-chamber stand open. The animal which is to provide the staple of the repast is killed and cooked in the open air. A long, low table, or more often merely the great wooden dishes, are placed along the center of the room, and low couches on either side, on which the guests, placed in order according to their rank, recline, leaning on their left elbow, with their feet turned away from the table. Every one, on coming in, takes off their sandals and leaves them at the door, socks or stockings being unknown. Servants stand behind the couches, and placing a wide, shallow basin on the ground, pour water over it on the feet of the guests. To omit this courtesy would be to imply that the visitor was one of very inferior rank. We can easily understand what a luxury this is to a travel-stained guest, who has walked over the hot sand of a Syrian road in summer. Behind the servant the loungers of the village crowd in, nor are they thought obtrusive in so doing.

Besides omitting the water for the feet, Simon had given Jesus no kiss. To receive a guest at the present day without kissing him on either cheek as he enters, is a marked sign of contempt, or at least a claim to a much higher social position.—H. B. Tristram, in Eastern Customs in the Bible Lands.

Alabaster Flasks

She brought an alabaster cruse of ointment, verse 37. We have evidence that perfumed oils—notably oil of roses, and of the iris plant, but chiefly the mixture known in antiquity as "foliatum"—were largely manufactured and used in Palestine. A flask with this perfume was worn by women depending from a cord around the neck. This flask, not always of glass, but of silver or gold, probably often of alabaster, was used both to sweeten the breath and perfume the person. Hence it seems not unlikely that the "alabastron" which she brought was none other than the flask of "foliatum" so common among Jewish women.—Alfred Edersheim, Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

We are more familiar with the anointing of Jesus during the last week of his life by Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, than we are with this anointing early in the Galilean ministry by the woman who was a sinner. There is no reason whatsoever for identifying this woman who was a sinner with Mary of Bethany nor yet with Mary Magdalene, two women of good position and character who were among Jesus' closest friends.

The anointing of our lesson took place in Capernaum.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

How do your pupils regard sin? A teacher of a class of boys in England discovered that they did not believe in "that sinner stuff." On slips of paper he recorded references to sin obtained from a Concordance and passed them out to be read the next week. The boys were surprised at the continuous repetition of "I have sinned." "Isn't it strange that there should be such a list of people through the Bible books all saying the same thing?" he asked them. "Some of them had done murders," was the answer of one of the boys. Yet there were some who had not, the leader continued, and instanced people against whom there was no known sin who were as conscious of sin as any of the Biblical characters, and he quoted, "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done." Then he continued: "It is easy to see why the greatest men always thought themselves the greatest sinners—it was because they set their standard so much higher than we do. The greater the man, the greater is his conscious need of forgiveness."

Sin began to have a very different aspect for those boys. Their sins could

be piled very high indeed when considered as the shirking of obligations and duties, and when they failed to live up to the highest standard of which they had knowledge.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

JESUS TRANSFORMING SINNERS

Beginning the Lesson. One of the most remarkable facts in the life of our Lord is that, by the censure of contemporaries, he was obliged repeatedly to defend himself for loving the sinful. It is a fact by which we may measure the moral progress of the world under the influence of Christian civilization. Now, philanthropy is generally practiced and held in high esteem; at the commencement of our era it created surprise, suspicion, disapprobation in the minds of well-conducted persons. The difference between now and then is so great that one finds it difficult to realize the fact stated, and specially difficult to think kindly of the faultfinders, or to regard them otherwise than as men of exceptionally heartless and inhuman spirit. We almost hate those self-righteous Pharisees for making it a matter of reproach to Jesus that he was the "Friend of publicans and sinners." Yet we do Christ's censors injustice by looking on them as rare monsters of inhumanity. They were simply men whose thoughts and sympathies were dominated by the spirit of their age. For the love to the sinful and the miserable which surprised them so greatly was a new thing on the earth, whose appearance marked the beginning of a new era, well called the era of Grace.—A. B. Bruce, in The Galilean Gospel.

Jesus was the Friend of Publicans and Sinners. One of the most mournful words ever brought across the sea is the confession of Benedict Arnold. Asked by an American visitor if he, the traitor, "wanted anything," Arnold sadly replied: "Only a friend." A friend? Yes, the traitor wanted a friend as no untraitorous man ever wanted one. It is well enough to talk about the loneliness of undeserved sorrow; but the loneliness of deserved sorrow is still worse, for the desert of the thing has probably cost the sufferer his friends. I want my friend, because he is my friend, to stand by me when I have done wrong. That is the sort of friend Jesus proved himself to be. The jibe of his enemies was gloriously true. He was "The friend of publicans and sinners." And it was the kindling sense of his sympathy which helped turn sin-broken hearts towards the light.—George Clark Peck, in The Method of the Master.

Jesus Transforms Sinners. Professor Drummond was in the habit of giving Sunday night talks to a large audience of students at Edinburgh, and always asked those who had any moral or spiritual difficulty to write him about it. One night he read part of a letter from a medical student who had fallen into deep sin. As he read the concluding words, which one who heard it said were weighted with the hopelessness of a lost soul, Professor Drummond said: "Gentlemen, if this man had given me his address I would have come over to Edinburgh by the next train to see him. I would fain hope he is here to-night." And then after telling what Jesus had done for the Penitent Woman and what he would do for the depraved today, he added: "As I walked through the city this morning, I noticed a cloud like a pure white bank resting over the slums. Whence came it? The great sun had sent down its beams into the city slums, and the beams had gone among the puddles, and drawn out of them what they sought, and had taken it aloft and purified it, and there it was, resting above the city, a cloud as white as snow; and God can make his saints out of material equally unfavorable. He can make a white cloud out of a puddle."

A Parable of the Human Soul. It was a West-end London drawing-room; an auction sale was in progress. It was a small crowd, but many of the great and fashionable were there, for the former master of the house had figured prominently in his day. The auctioneer had reached a violin; he lifted it, rubbed the place where the label should have been, and read out a famous name. Then he began to talk as only an auctioneer can talk, but despite his eloquence nobody would bid more than six guineas for that fiddle dark with age. He was giving up in despair of getting a proper price at all, when there was a movement at the door, and an old man came forward. Some one whis-

pered, "Paganini," and it was the great violinist himself. Up to the table he came. Lovingly he lifted the instrument, and began to pick out a note here and there. Then he took the bow and began to play; at first low and soft and pleading, then glad, triumphant, strong, and then wailing and sad. When he laid it down there was not a dry eye in the room. Six guineas? One hundred, two, three, five, six, seven hundred, and Paganini was the proud possessor of the violin at seven hundred guineas! Without the master touch worth six guineas!

Now, that is a parable. So it is with the human soul. Without the Master's touch, how broken, how worthless, how lost; but with the Master's touch anything is possible. The Lord Jesus Christ has attuned souls for whom no one else had any hope, has attuned them to the harmonies of heaven. And today his touch has still its ancient power.—Thomas Stewart.

A Great Forgiveness. The story of Jean Valjean as told by Victor Hugo in Les Miserables illustrates this text. Convicted of stealing a loaf for the hungry children of his sister, he was imprisoned for two years. Having tried to escape, the imprisonment was spun out to nineteen years. He had entered prison a simple-hearted youth, with no criminal intentions. Nineteen years of punishment had turned him into a social Ishmael. Every man's hand was against him: his should be against every man. Finding hospitality, the first night of his release, in the home of the good Bishop Bienvenu, by whom he was received and treated as an honored guest, he rewarded the kindness in the basest way. Rising in the dead of night, he took from the cupboard above the sleeping bishop's head the silver candlesticks which had been placed out in his honor at supper, and decamped. Caught and brought back next morning by the gendarmerie, he was confronted by the bishop, who forgave him, giving him the candlesticks. The forgiveness came in such a way that the man's whole life was changed from that morning. Gradually the remembrance of that noble pardon permeated his conscience and his heart, until he was transformed into the beneficent citizen and the man of love. To trace the influence of that forgiveness on the man's life is fascinating, is inspiring; and in doing so, we are able better to understand that he to whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much.—The Expository Times.

The Road to Reformation. It says in the Scriptures that "there is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved" but the name of Jesus Christ. That does not mean that there is some mysterious magic, some peculiar legerdemain about naming his name. "Name" stands for "personality," and the idea is that there is no other way by which a man is to be saved but by coming under the influence of the personality of God, which is most perfectly bodied forth in the person of Jesus Christ. No mere course of instruction, no certain amount of information, can make a bad man good or purge a person of his sins. There is no system of truth which can be taught, no set of books which can be read, no catechism which can change the shade of a sinful soul by so much as a shadow. But bring that life into actual living touch with the best of lives, and directly there comes upon it the strange spell of the redemptive personality of the God-man, the Word made flesh.—Henry Hitt Crane.

I do not wish to see my sins more plain,
But this: to know thy life, without a stain.

I would not see the vileness of my heart,
But this would know: how pure and true thou art.

I would forget my paltry life, so small,
And know thy greatness, thou, my All in All.

Oh! Teach me not how deep my spirit's night,
But flood me with thy beams, thou Perfect Light!
—Thomas Curtis Clark.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. The sense of the infinite worth of the single soul and the recoverableness of man at his worst, are the gifts of Christ.—Henry Drummond.

2. Christian sociability. Christian sociability is the permeation of life by friendly feeling, and the use of the common social intercourse of life to the highest ends. Our Lord did his work upon the earth in the common social relationships of life. We need to make our religion sociable and our sociability

religious. We need to use our homes and friendships as the channel of the best expression of that which is the highest and greatest thing in the world—the love of God in Christ. Honest discussion of religious truth in our conversation, invitations to our table extended to those with whom we have Christian sympathies, even if our social connections have been different, affability and approachability in our ordinary intercourse, loyalty to Christian principles in all our relationships in business and work—these are a few of the ways in which Christian sociability can advance the interests of the kingdom.—Robert E. Speer.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What Old Testament parables can you recall? What does Mt. 12.33 say is the way in which good men are known? 2. Give a definition of a parable as used by Jesus. 3. Describe the fields of Palestine when the sower sows his seed. 4. Is there danger of your becoming "gospel-hardened," and like the soil by the wayside? 5. What habits can one cultivate whose heart is like the thorny ground? 6. How can one cultivate the honest and good heart?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
JESUS THE FRIEND OF SINNERS

Beginning the Lesson. Jean Bernand, a French artist, conceived the thought of presenting Jesus as a living force today by portraying him in modern surroundings among modern people. In a series of scenes which he painted, Jesus alone is robed in Oriental costume; all the others are in European dress and represent modern self-righteous Pharisees, modern sinners, and modern Christians. In his painting of Simon's Feast, the woman that was a sinner, clad in a Paris gown, lies prostrate at the feet of Jesus; Simon, well-dressed, prosperous, self-satisfied, stands near by, looking disdainfully down on the penitent figure; and grouped about the table are other guests, their faces mildly pitying, indifferent, or cynical.

Such paintings do violence to our historical sense, but they are vivid applications of Christ's teachings. Who will describe the scene as it actually occurred?

Evidently the Pharisee had invited Jesus to his home out of curiosity. All men were talking about the wonderful Rabbi who could cure all manner of diseases, and the Pharisee wished to see and talk with him himself. But he considered Jesus beneath himself in social position, and therefore deemed it not necessary to show him the customary marks of courtesy, and by his omission of the kiss and the water for his feet and the oil for his head, all of which would have been offered to one considered an equal, he showed the greatest rudeness possible for an Oriental.

Into this scene there came a woman who had been a sinner. What did she do? What did Simon think? Jesus read Simon's thoughts: what did he say to him? Text Explained.

How the Woman that was a Sinner May Have Talked with Jesus. Harold Begbie, in one of his beautiful studies in The Hand of the Potter, tells us of a woman of this class who was saved simply by the gift of a flower from the loving hand of a Christian "sister" in the streets of London.

"The flower was white. The idea of this whiteness pervaded her consciousness. She made a contrast of the whiteness of that flower and the spreading darkness of her own soul. She said to herself, 'I was once white as this flower.' She looked at the white flower through a mist of pain and said to herself, 'I wish I could be pure.' She covered her eyes with her hands, turned her face to the pillow, and wept."

These tears were the beginning of a spiritual process that ended in her complete salvation. The "white flower" unlocked the cabinet of memory. The vision of the past shaped itself into a resolution for the future. Perhaps this woman of the Seventh Chapter of Luke was one of those who listened to the tale of the prodigal. As Christ spoke of the far country and the swine-trough, she said, "That is me!" As he told of the new resolution, "I will arise and go to my Father," she said, "Would that were me!" As he pictured the Father waiting at the window, looking at the door to welcome the child back with a kiss of love, she cried, "That shall be me"; and so with all the rags of her

shame upon her, she came back to her Father, and in him found mercy.—W. Mackintosh Mackay, in The Woman of Tact.

Jesus' Help for the Sorrowful. Sorrow's cry found Jesus alert and instantly ready for response. It appears that he never had any more important business on earth than to minister to those in trouble. He could be interrupted anywhere, at any time, as his disciples found to their dismay, by the call of suffering. He never even thanked his friends for trying to save his religious hours against the urgent need of a suppliant. He knew that sorrow is one need which can never wait patiently; hence he came in haste to meet it. He did not even delay to ask what kind of sorrow it was, nor how it had been caused, nor whether the results of it were likely to be serious. Putting aside every other business, he answered its call with passionate promptness, as a mother wakes at the faintest movement of her sick child. "How can you distinguish a cry for help?" asked a curious spectator of a life-saver on the bathing-beach at Newport. "With such a bedlam of noises made by the bathers, how can you tell when one is in distress?" "Very easily," was the reply. "Never once have I failed to distinguish the cry of distress from all other sounds. I can always tell it." Jesus was like that. An appeal for help rose piercingly clear above all clamors and confusions.—George Clarke Peck.

The Problem Today. At the bottom of our social structure there is a stratum of "the bad." This term is used, for example, of castings that come from the molds defective. In this sense no one will question the statement that a certain stratum of humanity is bad. It is composed of the imbecile, the incompetent, the vicious and the criminal. It is found in all our great cities, but it is found also in the smaller towns, and even in the country. It is a sort of human rubbish-heap, and is the perpetual accompaniment and foil of our fair civilization. Perhaps we ought to say that it is a constant feature or element of our civilization. Every community has its "rubbish-heap," large or small.

This is the great sociological problem that confronts us: How shall we reduce the "human rubbish-heap"? How shall we check the production of "the bad"? These are questions to make boys and girls—and men and women—think.—The Youth's Companion.

There is No One beyond his Help. Jesus saw the possibilities in every one, no matter how hardened or hopeless the exterior. No one was too low, too degraded, to be worth saving. He saw in Simon, the rough, swearing fisherman, the great strength of Peter, the rock. He saw in Matthew, the publican and outcast, the making of a noble apostle. He saw in this abandoned woman, a soul full of penitence, gratitude, and love.

"It is said that one of the most magnificent diamonds in Europe, which to-day blazes in a king's crown, once lay for months on a stall in a piazza at Rome labeled 'Rock-crystal, price one franc.' And it is thus that for ages the precious jewel of the soul lay unheeded and despised of men. Before Christ came, men honored the rich, the great, and the wise as we honor them now; but man as man was of little or no account.

"One of the saddest sights in a great city is its hospital for incurables. Who can think but with a pang of pity and of pain of these—old men and little children joined in one sad fellowship—for whom the physician's skill has done its best and failed, for whom now nothing remains but to suffer and to die? But in the world's great hospital of ailing souls, where every day the Good Physician walks, there is no incurable ward."

Sentence Sermons. In the meanest mortal there lies something noble.—Carlyle.

Who can measure his compassion?
It is like yon blue above,
Bending o'er us, sinful, sinning,
Its unpillared arch of love.—James Buckham.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. About what activities of Jesus have we already heard which show him as a Great Missionary? 2. What is a parable? 3. How does it differ from a fable? 4. In the parable who is the Sower? 5. What is the seed? 6. Describe the four kinds of hearers represented by the four kinds of soil. 7. How do you listen to the preaching of a sermon?

LESSON VIII—FEBRUARY 22

JESUS BEARING THE GOOD TIDINGS

GOLDEN TEXT: He went about through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good tidings of the kingdom of God. Luke 8.1

LESSON Luke 8 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 61.1-3, 10, 11

LUKE 8 And it came to pass soon afterwards, that he went about through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good tidings of the kingdom of God, and with him the twelve. 2 and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary that was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, 3 and Joanna the wife of Chuzas Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who ministered unto them of their substance.

4 And when a great multitude came together, and they of every city resorted unto him, he spake by a parable: 5 The sower went forth to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden under foot, and the birds of the heaven devoured it. 6 And other fell on the rock; and as soon as it grew, it withered away, because it had no moisture. 7 And other fell amidst the thorns; and the thorns grew with it, and choked it. 8 And other fell into the good ground, and grew, and brought forth fruit a hundredfold. As he said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

9 And his disciples asked him what this parable might be. 10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to the rest in parables; that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. 11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12 And those by the way side are they that have heard; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word from their heart, that they may not believe and be saved. 13 And those on the rock "are" they who when they have heard, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. 14 And that which fell among the thorns, these are they that have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with cares and riches and pleasues of "this" life, and bring no fruit to perfection. 15 And that in the good ground, these are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Great Missionary, verse 1. It came to pass soon afterwards—Luke gives no definite information as to the time—that Jesus went through cities and villages, a great Missionary accompanied by his twelve disciples, and everywhere he preached and brought good tidings of the Kingdom of God.

II. The Ministry of Women, verses 2, 3. Certain women whom Jesus had healed were also in the company, and among them was Mary Magdalene, probably so called because she was from Magdala, a village on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, and to distinguish her from other Marys. We are also told that she had been freed from seven demons, and by this is meant, not that she had been depraved, but that she had been violently insane and had been restored to her right mind by the power of Jesus. Another woman was Joanna, the wife of Chuzas, who was the steward, or manager, of the home of Herod Antipas. Mary, Joanna, Susanna, and many other women ministered unto them of their substance, gave their money for the food and other necessities of Jesus and his disciples. Throughout his ministry Jesus had not where to lay his head, but was dependent upon the hospitality and kindly ministry of friends and strangers.

> "Jesus was the discoverer of womanhood. Those who have read Madam Claire, by Susan Ertz, will remember that Madam was a lovable little old lady who used to pray to 'the God who understood women.' There is such a deity. How do I know? He was manifest in the flesh. In his Ecce Homo, Sir John Seeley declares that 'The female sex, in which antiquity saw nothing but inferiority, which Plato considered intended to do the same things as the male only not so well, was understood for the first time by Christ. His treatment brought out its characteristics, its superiorities, its peculiar power of gratitude and self-devotion'" (F. W. Boreham).

III. The Parable of the Sower, verses 4-8. Within the view of Jesus as he spoke this Parable of the Sower was doubtless a sower at work in a cornfield which descended to the water's edge. Dean Stanley describes such a field: "There was the trodden pathway running through the midst of it, with no fence or hedge to prevent the seed from falling here or there on either side of it or upon it; itself hard with the constant tramp of horse, mule, and human feet. There was the good rich soil; there was the rocky ground of the hillside protruding here and there through the cornfields; there were the large bushes of thorn—the 'nabk,' that kind of which tradition says the crown of thorns was woven—springing up in the very midst of the waving wheat."

A sower was sowing seed, so runs the parable. He lived in a hamlet or village, as all the farmers do now in Palestine, and went to his unfenced field afar off to sow his seed. Some of it fell on the beaten path which ran through the field and lay there on the hard surface till the birds devoured it. Some of the seed fell on the hillside where the underlying rock came very near the surface: the soil there was shallow and the warmth of the rock made the seed spring up quickly and look very promising, but the roots of the plants could not strike down deep and avoid the heat of the sun, and therefore the plants quickly withered away. Plants from the seed that fell where seeds of thorns were plentiful were overshadowed and starved to death by the more rapidly growing thorns. Some seed there was that fell on good ground, where the soil was rich and deep and free from thorns, and it yielded thirty and sixty and even a hundredfold. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear"—thus Jesus ended his parable.

IV. The Interpretation of the Parable of the Sower, verses 9-15. The disciples failed to understand this parable and asked Jesus its meaning. Jesus complied with their request, telling them that they might know the mysteries of God, (for they were spiritually receptive) which were disclosed in parables so that others might not see nor understand. "Compare the rabbinical saying, 'God entrusts not his mysteries save to the just.' The deeper things of Christ's Kingdom can only be understood by the initiated and spiritually enlightened, hence they are rightly called 'mysteries.' Matthew adds: 'For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath.' You who are spiritually minded, who already 'have' religious truth, shall learn more and more by my parables, until you become spiritually rich. But those who 'have not,' and do not desire to have spiritual knowledge, so far from learning more from my parables, will have even the poor confused notions of truth which they have bewildered and darkened" (Dummelow).

"The parable would mean little to hearers who held the crude and material ideas of the Kingdom that prevailed among the contemporaries of Jesus. It was used as an opportunity to consider a great truth, and for teachable disciples was full of suggestion and meaning, while for the critical curiosity of unfriendly hearers it was only a pointless story,—a means adopted by Jesus to save his pearls from being trampled under foot, and perhaps also to prevent too early a decision against him on the part of his opponents" (Rush Rhees).

> "It is good for us when we have heard or read the word, to examine ourselves, or to be examined, whether we have understood it or not" (Matthew Henry).

The seed is the word of God. "The seed aptly stands for Christian truth, 'the word of the Kingdom' or 'word of God,' because when implanted in the heart and conscience, it grows, develops, and brings forth spiritual truth" (One Volume Commentary).

Those whose hearts are closed to the truth by their absorption in other things are those by the wayside. Their minds are like the hard-beaten path, the seed cannot enter. You remember how a man heard Jesus say, "And when they bring him before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities" (Lk. 12.11), and at once his mind recurred to the one thing that occupied it so constantly—his quarrel with his brother—and he could hear no more, further words fell on deaf ears. As some one has expressed it: "The ruling idea swooped down like a hungry bird and caught the good seed away before it

could find entry; and all he was eager to ask was, 'Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me.'"

"The path was not always hard. Remember that. Once it was mellow like the rest of the field, but it had been trodden hard by much travel. Hearts are hardened by repeatedly hearing and not doing the truth. Says Ruskin, 'Every duty we omit obscures some truth we might have known.' This is what is meant by being 'gospel-hardened'" (George Henry Hubbard).

As the parable is told in Matthew and Mark, the seed lies on the surface of the hard ground and birds come and devour it. As Luke gives the parable, the seed is heard, but the devil comes and takes the word from their heart, that they may not believe and be saved. The meaning is the same: the preoccupation of their minds with other things sweeps away all truth which they have heard.

Those on the rock (rocky places, Matthew), listen to the word and seemingly readily accept it, but, like the soil over rocks, they are shallow, and no permanent impression is made upon them—they have no root, and in time of temptation fall away. "They are generally of the enthusiastic and excitable temperament, who, when brought under strong religious influences 'run well' for a time, but soon tire, and fall away." Such was the scribe of Matthew 8.19 who said, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," but Jesus told him he had not counted the cost.

A fire will sometimes start in the underbrush of a forest, and when it is over the trees will be found standing as erect as ever. But soon they begin to fall, for the fire has injured their roots. So man stumbles and falls who has no root in himself, who has no "staying strength," whose enthusiasm for the word is lightly kindled and soon extinguished. Genuine hearing of the word that begins with serious thought, deep feeling, and earnest purpose will develop a Christian character that will endure to the end.

Those who are sown among thorns are those who might bring forth much fruit had they not crowded minds; they try to serve God and mammon, and fail miserably. The seed enters and takes root, but it has to fight for its life with other growths. The cares and riches and pleasures of life choke the seed and it is not brought to perfection. "Christ's teachings have to struggle with business and social duties and amusements. The rich young ruler is such an one. Nicodemus, perhaps, is another. This is comparative failure, not utter disaster. It is the commonest of all" (Robertson).

"'Thorns' stand for any kind of weed that chokes out the desired crop. Corn is a weed if it grows in a wheat field. The blackberry is only a troublesome thorn if it springs up in the midst of a flower bed. So the most innocent occupations and even praiseworthy actions may become harmful if allowed to crowd vital truths from our lives. To be diligent in business is commendable and general. But when we become so completely absorbed in business that we can think of nothing else or do nothing else, when we permit the cares and plans of the week day to invade the Sabbath, when our minds are so fully occupied with our toil that we cannot attend to God's truth, then our very diligence becomes a vice. Many pleasures, too, are innocent until they interfere with duty and hinder our obedience to higher truth; then they are thorns and weeds" (George Henry Hubbard).

There are good hearers of truth, those that are sown in the good ground, hear the word and hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience. They hear the word—they are attentive; they accept it—it sinks deep and grows and ripens into fruit, thirtyfold, sixtyfold and one hundredfold.

"There is in every heart some capacity for reception, and the great central lesson and meaning of the parable is simply this, that it is in the coöperation of the seed and the soil, of the grace of God and the will of man, that there lie all the possibilities of that harvest which in the individual is character and in society the Kingdom of God" (H. R. Gamble).

V. Lessons from the Lamp, verses 16-18.

VI. Natural and Spiritual Kinship, verses 19-21.

VII. The Calming of the Storm, verses 22-25.

VIII. The Gerasene Demoniac Restored, verses 26-39.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

From whom seven demons had gone out, verse 2. Belief in demons was widespread in the ancient world. The earth was supposed to be full of demons who were seeking a habitation in human beings. It is interesting to recall here the fact that in the Moslem world today one who has an inclination to gape closes his mouth quickly, for gaping is considered the work of the devil who would thus enter and take possession of one. The Hindus are said to have the same belief, and they twirl their fingers before their mouths when gaping so as to prevent a devil from getting in.

And others fell amidst the thorns, verse 7. When the ground is fairly clear, or free from thorns, it is customary to scatter the seed upon it and then plow it in with the light Oriental plow. When a field has been for a season out of cultivation it becomes covered with strong yellow and blue thistles, and another year of neglect brings up a plentiful spread of thorn bushes, which are used for making brooms, and supply fuel for the village oven.—G. M. Mackie.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Our text follows immediately our lesson of last week. Mark tells us that Jesus sat in a boat on the Sea of Galilee, far enough from the multitude on the shore to be free from their importunities, yet near enough to address them, as he taught them many things by means of parables, the first of which was the Parable of the Sower. An excellent definition of a parable as used by Jesus is this: "A narrative, fictitious, but agreeable to the laws and usages of human life, by which either the duties of men or the things of God, particularly the nature and history of God's Kingdom, are figuratively portrayed."

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

What one is told may or may not be remembered. What one thinks out for oneself is never forgotten: the exercise of one's mind has made it one's own. Jesus taught by parable because a story always attracts, because truth embodied in a tale is remembered when abstract truth is not, and also because it was a method which aroused thought. His hearers became active rather than passive listeners, their minds were at work, they listened to his words, and endeavored to grasp the meaning underlying them. The Parable of the Sower, which seems so easy to us because with it we are given its interpretation, proved too difficult for the disciples; but their minds had labored over it and therefore its lesson, when explained, made a lasting impression.

Are you teaching in this way? Are your pupils active listeners? Do you use stories and questions which make them think? Do you tell them what you want them to know, or do you lead them to give expression to the truth you are seeking to impress? Do you teach them, or do you make them teach themselves?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

CULTIVATING AN HONEST AND GOOD HEART

Beginning the Lesson. Our Parable of the Sower served two purposes at the time Jesus uttered it: it was both a defense and an explanation of the situation as regards the Kingdom of God—here that personal, invisible Kingdom within the hearts of men where Jesus is King. It taught that the reason the yield of grain was not greater was not in the seed sown, but in the hearts that received it: the reason that some did not make greater progress was that so few hearts were prepared to receive the word of God. It taught that, though the Kingdom was slow in appearing—though the religious authorities opposed the King, though even his kindred thought him insane (as the events of that day showed, Mt. 12.22-50; Mk. 3.21), and though his real followers were few in number—they need not be discouraged; much of the seed sown failed to yield fruit, but that which did, yielded manyfold.

It's a Shame to Let a Poor Character Grow in Such a Land as This. Two young men were riding along a country road in Iowa. Suddenly one of the young men called the attention of the other to the difference in the corn growing on opposite sides of the road. The corn on one side was filled with weeds half as high as the corn itself; the stalks were slender and the blades were thin and yellow-looking; the ears were small and scarce. On the other side of the road, though the soil was the same, hardly a weed was to be seen. The cornstalks were strong and thick and tall; the blades were broad and healthy and dark green; the ears were large and many.

Pointing to the inferior corn, one of the young men said to his companion, "It is a shame to let such corn grow on land worth three or four hundred dollars an acre." The one who spoke was proud of making his land produce well. His land was his opportunity to do something worth while in life, and he was making the best of it. It was shameful to waste a grand opportunity to help the world and at the same time to earn a fair profit.

There are some things more precious than corn that grow in every State in the Union. One of them is character. No State can boast of being the great character-producing State, for our whole land is rich soil for the growth of character. With all the opportunities for preparation, development and service, with the Christian institutions and high ideals that are ours as a people, we ought to say with the farmer boy in Iowa, "It is a shame to let poor character grow in such a land as this."

If young people can get that pride in good, strong Christian character which the farmer boy had in raising the finest corn on his good land, then the great problems that come up in the future will be surely and safely solved.

"Character is the diamond that scratches every other stone." Strong, true character will enable you to make your mark in the world in whatever service you undertake. We have the soil, and we have the seed in our true-hearted young Americans. Let us all do our part in making the United States of America the great character-producing country of the world.—The Youth's Companion.

Another Parable. "What a beautiful field of wheat!" exclaimed a visitor in Virginia. "You wouldn't have said so eighteen months ago," the owner replied. "It was worn-out land. Nothing but spindling weeds had grown there within my memory. One day Professor Price came along and said he wanted to rent that field. 'It's no good,' I told him. But he said he wanted it as an object-lesson, to show what could be done with such soil, so I let him have it. Well, he put it into potatoes and had a bumper crop; and you can see what he has now."

When Professor Price was afterwards asked how he had done it, he replied: "Why, all the land about here is naturally good land. So whenever I see a poor field I study the soil, discover what chemical elements are lacking, employ a commercial fertilizer mixed according to a special formula which I prepare, and I use only selected seed. By the use of intelligent methods any of this so-called 'worthless land' may be brought to fine fertility."

Can you not interpret this story as a parable of the soil of your hearts? All of you have naturally good hearts, but not all of you yield harvests of good deeds. Something is lacking, perhaps it is the spirit of generosity, the desire to please others, the will to be of service in the world, the realization that you are not in this world merely to have a good time, the love of Christ which constrains one to do what would please him. The first thing needful is to find out what is the matter with your hearts, why they are not good soil, and then to remedy it so that they shall yield abundant fruit. When you have a heart and mind open and willing to accept and practice the teaching of Christ then you will have much fruit.

The Fruitful Life. Jesus explains the secret of fruitful hearing in the words, "These are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience." Jesus here emphasizes three qualities as necessary to fruitfulness of hearing: sincerity, meditation, and patience.

Sincerity. "An honest heart" means a preparedness to receive the truth, free from prejudices. We must not listen to the gospel with minds already made up or refuse to listen when it brings some unflattering truth home to us.

An honest heart means a willingness to follow the truth even when that involves changing our conduct. An open mind does not mean absence of conviction. Many people talk in a boasting way about having an open mind when all they have is an empty head. What is the difference between the two?

Meditation. "Such as . . . having heard the word, hold it fast." The Kingdom to-day greatly needs men who will think over the Word of God till it becomes a part of them. Emerson says that the hardest task in the world is to think. One might almost be tempted to say also that it is the rarest thing in the world. "It is not the amount of knowledge you have, but the use you put it to,—it is not the number of good sayings you have heard and can repeat that will profit you, but the place in your hearts you have given them and the connection they have with the motives, principles, and ruling ideas of your life." Meditation must not be confused with a lazy, hazy kind of day-dreaming or reverie. That leads to weakening of the mind and will. Meditation is the hard thinking by which truth is tied up closely to practical life. Why is it becoming a lost art? What forces in present-day life are hostile to it? What means may be employed to keep it?

Patience. This, too, is an active rather than a passive virtue. It means perseverance in the face of discouragement. Its symbol is not folded hands, but rather the clenched hands of the farmer on the handles of the plow. He looks down the long furrows with courageous perseverance for his task, willing to work and wait, because he has faith in the seed and soil.

If we keep our hearts open and receptive, the truth which comes into them will bring forth unexpected fruit in personal growth and increasing strength of character and influence. Into each life which is kept teachable and hospitable to the truth Christ continually comes that we may have life and have it more abundantly. The rich fullness of Christian personality with its unexhausted capacity for joy and service is a growth, sure and unfailing, if the life is only open to the seed of God's Word. The parable holds out to each of us the blessed encouragement that our lives may become that marvelous garden of God described by Paul: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control."—Halford E. Luccock, in Studies in the Parables of Jesus.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. Obsession and demon possession: the insane, the unbalanced, the abnormal.

2. Apply every known system of horticulture and hearticulture for the largest fold of result.—Henry H. Warren.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Explain verse 6. 2. When the prophet Ezekiel received his commission, what did he learn about his responsibility in regard to those who would not listen to his warning? 3. Explain verse 21. 4. Explain the last clause of verse 22. 5. Why should we give up our good money to send missionaries to foreign lands; why not leave these people to their own religions?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

TAKE HEED HOW YE HEAR

Beginning the Lesson. Have you ever wondered how Jesus and his twelve disciples could give up their occupations and go about doing good with no visible means of support? You know how different the climate and the manner of life in Palestine are from ours, and you know that their needs were not to be compared with the needs of thirteen men in New England, for example. You remember that Jesus was always welcome in that Bethany home of Martha and Mary, and doubtless in many another home. Moreover, they could wrap themselves up in their "abbas," or cloaks, and gain a good night's rest on any hillside; they traveled mainly on foot and needed no carfare; and their clothing never went out of fashion. And then here early in our text we learn another fact about the way they could live: what was it? What were the names of some of the women? What do we know about them?

Ministering unto a Missionary with their Substance. At the close of a week's evangelistic services in a village, a prominent man was talking excitedly to an acquaintance. Mr. Stirling had done so much good, it could never be estimated

in money, but it was not right that he should be allowed to go away without some pay for his services. "I am resolved that he shall have a good, generous collection," declared the man of business, drawing some bills from his pocket. "Now you put something with this," he exclaimed, "and I will go round among the other men, and we will soon have a good sum."

But the other merely smiled, and laid a restraining hand upon the arm of his friend, as he said (as recorded in the Youth's Companion):

Women who Ministered unto Jesus with their Substance —Tissot

"Wait just a moment. I happen to know the reason why Mr. Stirling does not charge anything for his services, and why he does not wish to be paid for them. He has been a minister and an evangelist for many years, and you can see that his heart is in his work. He has two sons. Neither of them felt called to the work of the ministry. They wanted to be business men, and their father, without making too much of his own disappointment, encouraged and helped them in fitting themselves for a business life. As the years passed on, these sons prospered greatly, and at last they said to their father:

" 'Father, we know that you were sorry that neither of us was inclined to be a minister, but we did not feel that we were adapted for that work. But we love and honor you and the work you have done, and now we want to go in with you, as silent partners.

" 'We will attend to the entire financial part of the work. Go where you please, stay as long as you think you are needed, never stop to think whether the people can pay you or not. We don't care whether you hold your services in a rich city church, in the slums or in the remotest country church; we will pay all your expenses, and give you a large salary in addition. Perhaps in that way we can help to do more good than if we had become ministers ourselves.'

"So for a number of years John Stirling has been conducting his meetings on that basis; going where he is most needed, and leading hundreds of lives out of darkness into light."

The man of business slowly folded up the bills which he held in his hand, and returned them to his pocket.

"Well," he said, "I certainly will never do anything to disturb a scheme like that. It is the finest partnership I ever heard of, and I don't know who is drawing the most desirable dividends, John Stirling, or his sons—or the rest of us."

A Parable Teaches a Lesson. "Suppose that close to my farm lives a bad neighbor who keeps fierce hounds in his house, worrying my sheep exceedingly, and also killing some. What, then, would you have me do? Should I kill the hounds to be free of this worry? Truly my neighbor would say unto me, 'Thou hast killed my hounds, yet their value is greater than the value of your sheep. Pay thou me!' Is it not better that I should take the hounds, and going into my neighbor's house, say, 'These are thine; now pay me for the harm they have done my flock'?"

What is the only answer to this question? This is a supposed case that might actually happen in a country where sheep are kept, and as a story it is very simple and easy to understand. But it is more than a story; we call it a parable for it was told for a purpose and has a meaning besides being just a story of something that might happen. It was spoken at four o'clock in the morning to a group of very excited men who had been talking all night and

had not been able to agree as to what they should do. They were at the home of President Kruger in South Africa, and the parable was spoken by General Joubert. They had caught Jameson and other Englishmen who were their enemies, and most of them were determined to put these men to death as soon as day dawned. General Joubert had told them that if they killed the Englishmen the English Nation would make them suffer, but the angry men would not listen to him. Then at last he told them this parable, and he added his meaning in these words: "We have caught the pack. Is it not better to send them to the British government with demands for satisfaction, lest the British send more hounds to worry us anew?" The angry men, who would not listen to his advice before, now saw that it was wise advice and followed it.

Who can tell me what a parable is? Jesus often used parables to teach a lesson. What is the one which we study today? Let us first hear the story, and then let us explain its meaning.

Ears that Hear Not. Have you never known what it is apparently to listen to a conversation and yet not really to hear a word thereof? Your ears were not closed, your organs of hearing were in good condition, the words were promptly carried by the nerves to your brain, but your mind did not take cognizance of them, did not heed them, because your thoughts were engaged upon something else. Our hearing is not an involuntary process, it is directly controlled by our wills and is subject to direct training. By taking heed how we hear we can increase our power to hear. There is always danger of receiving the word even as the hard or the shallow or the thorny ground receives the seed. Take heed how ye hear.

Moral Deafness. There is a form of deafness known to physicians in which the person affected is able to hear everything except words. In such a case the ear, as an apparatus for mere hearing, may be so perfect that the tick of a watch or the song of a bird is readily appreciated, but owing to a local injury deeper than the ear, for it is in the brain itself, all spoken words of his mother tongue are as unintelligible to the sufferer as those of a foreign language. Give him a book, and he may read as understandingly as ever, but every word addressed to him through his ear reaches his consciousness only as a sound, not as a word. There is a moral deafness which corresponds to this physical infirmity, but which, instead of being rare, is as common as it is harmful and disabling. To all men there is given an inner ear, which has been fashioned to hear Wisdom's words, but that ear often seems so dull of hearing that there appears no sign of response to her utterances.—W. H. Thomson.

Hearing but not Attending. In Jonathan Edwards' time a revival of religion was termed "an attention to religion"—such a revival is always needed. It is a terribly solemn thought that our very familiarity with the word of God may cause us to hear and not attend.

William M. Taylor quotes from Tennyson's Northern Farmer, who said about the parson's sermon—

> "And I always came to his church, before my Sally were dead,
> And heard him a-bumming away like a buzzard-cock over my head;
> And I never knew what he meant, but I thought he had something to say,
> And I thought he said what he ought to have said, and I came away"—

and adds: "The hearer should stir up his attention when he enters the place of worship, by pausing a little to ask himself why he is there, and to lift up his heart in prayer to God, for the open ear to hear, and the open heart to receive the message which his Lord has, in his providence, prepared for him."

Sentence Sermons. Wise words in dull ears are but lifeless lore.—Goethe.

> Live Christ!—and all thy life shall be
> A sweet, uplifting ministry,
> A sowing of the fair white seeds
> That fruit through all eternity.—John Oxenham.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What advantages were there in the Seventy going two by two? 2. Why did Jesus bid them take no purse, wallet, nor shoes? 3. What was the wallet? 4. Why were they not to salute any one on the way? 5. Why were they told not to go from house to house? 6. How may we be helpers of Jesus?

LESSON IX—MARCH 1

JESUS SENDING FORTH MISSIONARIES

GOLDEN TEXT: The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest. Luke 10.2

LESSON Luke 9.1 to 10.24 DEVOTIONAL READING Romans 10.8b-15

LUKE 10. Now after these things the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself was about to come. 2 And he said unto them, The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest. 3 Go your ways; behold, I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves. 4 Carry no purse, no wallet, no shoes: and salute no man on the way. 5. And into whatsoever house ye shall enter, first say, Peace "be" to this house. 6 And if a son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon him: but if not, it shall turn to you again. 7 And in that same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. 8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: 9 and heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. 10 But into whatsoever city ye shall enter, and they receive you not, go out into the streets thereof and say, 11 Even the dust from your city, that cleaveth to our feet, we wipe off against you: nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh.

17 And the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject unto us in thy name.

21 In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father; for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight. 22 All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth who the Son is, save the Father; and who the Father is, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. **The Mission Tour of the Twelve,** 9.1-6.

II. **Herod's Perplexity,** 9.7-9.

III. **The Five Thousand Fed,** 9.10-17.

IV. **The Acknowledgment of Peter,** 9.18-22.

V. **Saving and Losing Life,** 9.23-27.

VI. **The Transfiguration,** 9.28-36.

VII. **The Cure of a Demoniac,** 9.37-43.

VIII. **The Son of Man's Fate,** 9.44, 45.

IX. **Who Is the Greatest,** 9.46-48.

X. **Not against Is for,** 9.49, 50.

XI. **Inhospitable Samaritans,** 9.51, 56.

XII. **Discipleship Exacting,** 9.57-62.

XIII. **The Seventy Sent on a Mission, 10.1-3.** As Jesus had sent out The Twelve on a special mission tour (9.1-6), so he now sent out seventy others. The text reads, Now the Lord appointed seventy others; but the appointment was for a special service, not as in the case of The Twelve, for permanent work. Jesus sent these men out in companies of two, for mutual help and companionship, and bade them go into the cities which he himself was planning to visit after their preliminary work.

"We have all admired the wondrous wisdom of that shrewd, sagacious plan. There is no evidence that Jesus relied much upon conferences, congresses, and the like. As a permanent factor in character-building he

trusted to the influence of a companion rather than to the inspiration of a crowd. He was a great believer in those walks, side by side, along the winding Galilean highways. He attached extraordinary value to those heart-to-heart talks beneath the overarching branches, when the tired comrades camped together at the close of the long and trying day. And so, all through the ages, he has been pairing us off. Here you have Peter and John; there you have Paul and Silas; yonder you have Barnabas and Mark. The Franciscan friars, the Dominican monks, the Lorillard preachers, the traveling pairs of evangelists, all furnish corroborative evidence of the wisdom of the sacred scheme. The Pope and General Booth have little in common; but they both saw the advantage of sending out the emissaries two by two. The sisters may wear convent garb or coal-scuttle bonnets; it does not matter; the principle is the same. There is no need to limit to a narrow domestic significance the great primal affirmation that it is not good that a man should be alone" (Frank W. Boreham).

The multitudes were like a vast field ready for reaping, he told them; the only trouble was that there were not enough reapers. "My father is the Husbandman (John 15.1), the Lord of the harvest, pray ye him, therefore, that he send forth laborers into his harvest," he said to them.

"Everything vital in the missionary enterprise hinges on prayer" (John R. Mott).

And then he bade them answer their own prayer in saying to them, "Go your ways; behold, I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves."

"No teeth nor claws, no swords nor guns! They went as Paul went into Macedonia with the gospel of peace. They went as Livingstone went into the heart of the dark continent, with no weapon but the great love in his own heart. They went as John G. Paton went among the cannibals of the South Sea, disarming their opposition by the potent influence of their own unselfish devotion. They went, taking their lives in their hands, relying upon instruction and persuasion, kindness and self-sacrifice, for the spiritual victories they were set to win. Lambs among wolves, kindness pitted against cruelty—this is the line of spiritual advance" (Charles R. Brown).

XIV. The Counsels Given The Seventy, 10.4-11. These men were to travel light; they were to take with them no purse, no wallet, no shoes. They were to have no money in their girdles, which answered the purpose of a purse, and no provisions in their wallet, which was their provision basket (the Greek word translated "wallet" may also mean "begging-bag"; Jesus did not want his messengers to beg their way from "outsiders"), and no shoes in addition to the sandals which they wore. Their message was vital, they must hasten, hence they could not stop to salute any one on the way, for Oriental salutations consume much time.

Co-workers in India Today

On entering a house, they were to utter the familiar "salaam," or friendly greeting, of "Peace be to this house"—a prayer that the household might be blessed in every respect. "And if a son of peace [a beautiful phrase for one inclined to peace] be there," Jesus added, "your peace shall rest upon him."

"But what were they to do when their friendly salutation was met with scorn, and the hospitality that was due a stranger was denied them? Often men who are great and noble in situations where popular favor surrounds them, lose their self-mastery under the irritation of little rebuffs and slight personal opposition. Jesus understood this, and so he told the men who were to represent him in the villages: If your

good-will is repulsed, you, at least, shall not lose it, but it shall turn to you again, and you shall keep calm and sweet and dignified under the irritation and the defeat" (Ozora S. Davis).

"What a beautiful idea, that the unheeded Peace comes back and blesses the heart that wished it, as if courteous and kind words never went unrewarded" (T. R. Glover).

In the home which welcomes you, remain, freely enjoying its hospitality, for the sustaining of my messengers is not a charity but a debt, and the laborer is worthy of his hire. Do not lose time in going about from house to house: see Light from Oriental Life. Eat such things as are set before you: do not ask for special fare. Heal the sick, and say unto them, The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. "It had come nigh because the Christians were there speaking the truth of the Kingdom, living the life of the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God means the sway and rule of the Divine Spirit, and it was there in the lives of those men. By the subtle, irresistible power of spiritual contagion it would be communicated to many another life" (Brown).

If the city is unfriendly to you, go out into the street thereof and say (the declaration is to be publicly made), We repudiate responsibility as to your fate by this symbolic action, that of shaking off the dust that cleaves to our feet, but we bid you remember that the Kingdom of God is come nigh. "It has been brought nigh to bless, but, refused, left behind a judgment."

XV. The Fate of Cities that Did not Accept the Message, 10.12-16.

XVI. The Mission of The Seventy Crowned with Success, 10.17-20. The Seventy returned with joy, and reported that even the demons had been subject to them in the name of Jesus. By a figure of speech (verses 18 and 19) Jesus declared that in their success he saw a prophecy of the ultimate conquest of his Kingdom over the whole world, but he gently rebuked their self-satisfaction by adding, "In this rejoice, not that the spirits are subject unto you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." "Do not rejoice in your command of a gift, but rejoice in your relation to your God" (J. H. Jowett).

> "The sudden rally which drives back the enemies' line at a single point, the swift winning of some hard-fought battle, does not for a moment rank in real significance with the permanent enrollment of men and women as citizens of that kingdom which is an everlasting kingdom" (Charles R. Brown).

XVII. The Joy of Jesus, 10.21-24. Jesus himself rejoiced in the success of his followers and gave thanks to the Father that he had hidden these things from the wise and understanding (the scribes and Pharisees who thought themselves such) and revealed them to babes, the simple, unlearned Seventy.

Jesus realized that even his followers could not understand him, could not grasp his relationship to his Father, nor could they understand the Father. "Verse 22 has been called 'a slab of Johannine marble in the plain brick structure of the Synoptics.' It is the fullest expression of Jesus' unique self-consciousness as Son of God found in the Synoptics. The concealing or revealing of the Father is a trust and a task committed to Jesus by God. There is no claim of universal sovereignty here; but of entire filial dependence. What is the Son's by nature, he imparts to men in grace. It is not an arbitary but a voluntary function Jesus here claims in saying: "No one knoweth who the Son is, save the Father; and who the Father is, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Carry no wallet, verse 4. There is a special meaning suggested by one of the monuments, which suits the context. It was erected in the Roman Imperial period at Kefr-Hanar, in Syria, by a person who calls himself, in the Greek inscription, a "slave" of the Syrian goddess. "Sent by the lady," as he says himself, this heathen apostle tells of the journeys on which he went begging for her, and boasts triumphantly that "each journey brought in seventy bags." The words here employed is "pera": it clearly means the beggar's

collecting-bag. The same special meaning would make excellent sense in our text: there is to be no earning and also no begging of money.—Adolph Deissman, in Light from the Ancient East.

Go not from house to house, verse 7. When a stranger arrives in a village, the neighbors, one after another, usually invite him to eat with them. There is a strict etiquette about it, involving much ostentation and hypocrisy, and a failure in the due observance of such hospitality is frequently resented, and often leads to alienations and feuds amongst neighbors.—Wm. A. Thompson, in The Land and the Book.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Galilean ministry was at an end. Jesus purposed going slowly toward Jerusalem, preaching as he went. As a last appeal he would go through the cities and villages, and he sent The Seventy in advance to prepare the people for his coming. Moreover, he knew that the time with his followers was short, and he wished to have as many of them as possible trained to carry on his work after he should leave them.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest: go your ways; behold I send you. A teacher of sixteen young men thought herself unfitted for Sunday School work, because no conversions had occurred in the class (as reported in The Herald and Presbyter), and resigned her position. Both superintendent and pastor had noted the unflagging interest of her pupils, and they would not consent to her giving it up. In her anxiety she prayed more earnestly for the Holy Spirit's help. One day while thus pleading, she was so strongly moved to go and see a certain one at his home that she at once yielded, and in that home she told her anxiety, and when prayer was suggested the pupil knelt with her and soon yielded his heart to Christ. Thus encouraged, she visited another, and another, in turn, as opportunity opened, till she saw the whole sixteen won to Christ and added to the church. As vacancies occurred in her class, others joined, who were also converted. These pupils passing out into the business of life were urged by her to write annually a letter as to their Christian life, till finally, as the years rolled on, she was receiving over two hundred letters from ministers, lawyers, mechanics, farmers, physicians, and others from various parts of the world, still busy in pulpit, in Sunday School, or in other church work. What if this teacher had not followed up her own prayers?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

OUR MISSIONARY TASK

Beginning the Lesson.. In The High Calling, Dr. Jowett declares that the measure of our Christian growth may be estimated by the circles of our sympathetic interest. What is the circumference of my outlook? he questions. Are my sympathies represented by my umbrella, and do they merely cover myself? Or are they something like a garden tent, and do they cover a family? Or are they like a great marquee, and can all the people in the village find shelter beneath its roof? Or still grander and nobler, do they find their symbol in the overarching firmament, and do they embrace "all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues"? What is the scope of my sympathetic circle? They tell us that the concentric rings in the interior fiber of a tree record its age and the story of its growth. And most sure I am that the concentric rings in the soul-interests of a Christian tell the story of his growth in grace. How large is the circle of our prayers? Are our prayers merely concerned with our own things, or do they reach out to grasp the needs of a race?

This was the lesson Jesus sought to teach his disciples one day when he bade them pray—for what?

Continue with Explanations and Comments.

A Social, Sympathetic, Spiritual Ministry. Jesus pictures his disciples at table, and shows that he is called to a great social ministry. "Eat," he says,

"such things as are set before you." That is extremely important. Take the people, that is to say, as you find them. Don't expect too much of them; and don't pretend to be superior to them. They are very human—food-eaters all of them. And you are very human—a food-eater, too. Sit down beside them, then, in a frank recognition of a common humanness.

I remember once hearing Mr. Egerton Young, the apostle of the North American Indians. He told us of his first entrance among the wild people of a certain Indian tribe. The braves greeted the pale-face with the most cordial salutations of welcome, and then they gave a great feast in his honor. The Indians in feathers, and belts, and leggings, and moccasins, and war paint—squatted round in a circle, giving the missionary a place among them. Then the feast began. A huge haunch of venison was brought and handed, steaming, to the chief. He took it with his immense brown hands, lifted it to his mouth, tore a shred of meat from it with his teeth, and passed the joint to the brave sitting next. He did likewise, and so it was handed down from one pair of grimy, greasy hands to another, each man burying his face for a moment in the savory meat, until at last it reached the astonished missionary. Mr. Young told us that when the remains of the haunch reached him, his stomach turned at the idea of gnawing at the bone that the redmen had left. But he saw that to refuse was to abandon all hope of ever winning them. And so, for the sake of Christ and his gospel, he gulped down all squeamishness, and pressed the morsel to his lips. He "ate such things as were set before him," and he won his way into the hearts of the untamed tribesmen by doing so. That is very fine.

Jesus pictures his disciple at the bedside, and shows that he is called to a great sympathetic ministry. "Heal the sick," he says. And that, too, is vastly important. The Church has produced the medical profession, and there is therefore no further need for her ministers to exercise special gifts of healing. But that does not by any means dispose of this second great word of command. There are drops of healing virtue that distil from compassionate glances and from sympathetic words. We must never lose a chance of being in the house of trouble, by the bed of sickness, or in the valley of tears.

Jesus pictures his disciple on the doorstep, and shows that he is called to a great spiritual ministry. "Say unto them," he says, "that the Kingdom of God has come to the door." And the thing that will break your heart in the Christian ministry is the fact that whilst you were able to take all heaven to every doorstep on which you stood, there were so few—so very few—houses in which you could get it any farther. The door opened, and you were asked in; but the Kingdom of God they would not ask in. But there were some homes into which the Kingdom of God had entered, and there were others into which you yourselves have taken it. And those glorified homes into which the Kingdom of God enters become miniature heavens themselves.—Condensed from The Golden Milestone, by F. H. Boreham.

Is Protestantism Responsible for the non-Christianization of America? It might seem harsh to say so, but after an unlimited religious control of the greater part of the country for two hundred years, the majority of Americans have no religious affiliation. About fifty-five million—this would seem a generous figure, too—of Americans are allied with some Christian Church, and of these much more than one-third are Roman Catholics. This is the condition in a country of over one hundred and ten million people after Protestantism has had a practically free field for two centuries. No one would take from the individual Protestants all credit for their zeal. The individual is not to be blamed. It is the system that has failed. It has been given a long and faithful testing, and has been found wanting.—The Holy Cross Magazine.

Mohammedan Workers. Islam does not need to organize missionary societies. Its entire membership is a propagandist agency. Every Moslem muezzin, teacher, trader, camel driver, hill fighter, bridegroom or bride is a missionary for the prophet of Mecca.

The consequence is that in India the Mohammedan population has increased six and a half millions during the last eighteen years.—S. Parkes Cadman.

The Layman's Duty to Labor in the Harvest. Any man who has a religion is bound to do one of two things with it, change it or spread it. If it isn't true, he must give it up. If it is true, he must give it away. This is not the duty of ministers only. Religion is not an affair of a profession or of a caste. It is the business of every common man. The true ideal of Christian evangelism is the propagation of Christianity, not by public preachers so much as by private conversation and the testimony of common men.

And no religious propaganda is likely to accomplish much that does not spring from, and rest upon, a family life visibly influenced by religion. If men talk about Christianity to their fellows and have religionless homes, or homes marked by unkindness, harshness, distrust, their talk is as sounding brass and clanging cymbals. When all our homes are evidently filled with the Spirit of Christ, then the gospel will spread as it will never spread from Church or chapel.—Robert E. Speer.

Shall the Churches Junk Foreign Missions? The foreign missionary enterprise itself is its own best and adequate defense. The vast majority of those who would close up its stations and recall its workers have never had any real first-hand contact with its work. Courts of law will not accept hearsay evidence. The bulk of the testimony now being offered by those who would junk the missionary enterprise reminds me of the statement attributed to Lincoln when told that two witnesses had sworn that they had seen the defendant do the things he was accused of doing. "That's nothing," said Lincoln. "I can bring a score of witnesses who will swear that they didn't see him do it." How long must we suffer the complaints of those whose chief qualification to speak about missionary work is the fact that they can swear that they never saw a real missionary at work in his own mission field?

A century ago the foreign missionary enterprise was comparatively insignificant. Its operations were upon a very limited scale. Its technique was simple—its resources meager. The rapidity with which the movement took root at home and expanded abroad is one of the most significant facts of modern world history. If anyone can look at the magnitude of the task, the intricacy of its problems, and the rapidity of its expansion and say that this should all have been accomplished without mistakes and blunders, he thereby declares himself a fool. Blunders there have been. Taking all things into consideration, the wonder is not that there have been serious mistakes, but that the mistakes were not greater in number and more damaging in their character.

There are at least four objections often urged against the Churches' missionary activities in other lands. The first of these is that the task is so difficult as to be well-nigh impossible of achievement.

It is perfectly proper for men to risk their lives in conquering the air. We admire the men who have scorned the difficulties involved in tracking down a murderous germ, forcing it to yield the secret of its dread and evil power till whole populations have been made immune against the ravages of those diseases which in the past have decimated our cities and inflicted indescribable misery upon the human race. As long as Mount Everest is unscaled, there will not be wanting adventurous spirits who will dare the perils of climbing and bitter cold, and we shall praise them for it. But when it comes to spiritual conquests, that is another matter. What right has the Church to be adventurous and courageous? What business has the Church undertaking difficult and dangerous and exhausting tasks?

In the second place, say the critics, the foreign missionary movement has proved itself to be a disturbing element in the life of the world.

The Christian religion inevitably results in an enhanced sense of the sacredness of personality. Special customs and economic conditions which thwart the development of personality, which maim and cripple and degrade human beings, are thereby soon challenged. Social unrest and national upheaval can scarcely be wholly avoided under those conditions.

In the third place, foreign missionary work is criticized as too presumptuous. Whenever we send our missionaries across the seas we publish abroad the fact that we believe that we have something to give which they do not possess. It is an assumption of superiority. What right have we to make such an assumption?

It is a remarkable thing that wherever Christianity has been brought into contact with other religions it has imparted to them a new significance and a brighter glory. Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism never attained such moral power and insight until they began to bask in the sunshine of Christian influence. One is reminded of the statement of Jesus, "I came not to destroy, but to fulfil."

In the fourth place, the foreign missionary enterprise is opposed as altogether too costly. Seventy millions of dollars is a lot of money for the poor people of our country to be contributing every year to evangelize the world. What a terrific strain that puts upon the financial resources of the country! Reduced to its per capita rate for Congregationalists it means that we are expected to make the enormous contribution of about a nickel a week for foreign work.—Condensed from an Article in The Congregationalist, by Alfred E. Randell.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. Why the Christian religion is basic for missionary enterprise.

2. What are the motives that prompt missionary giving with the average church member?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How did Jesus regard Samaritans? 2. How did Samaritans regard Jesus? 3. What do we mean when we say that some one is "a good Samaritan"? 4. What excuses might the priest and the Levite have given for not helping the victim? 5. Would such excuses hold good? 6. How has our idea of who are our neighbors become enlarged since the Great War? 7. What responsibilities has our new viewpoint brought us?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HELPERS OF JESUS

Beginning the Lesson. "Office-boy wanted": does such a sign remain long in a store-window? Why not? The call for workers of any sort in store or shop or factory of a great city quickly brings a response from more applicants than are needed. Jesus once sent out a call for workers which has been repeated through the centuries and has not yet had a satisfying response: what was it?

Continue with Explanations and Comments.

Salute No Man on the Way. The most important thing in the world is to tell people about Jesus and carry his message to all nations. When Jesus sent his first disciples on that errand he said, "Make haste, and stay the work for nobody." Africans have a story about the lizard and the chameleon. These two little creatures are very like each other, but the lizard is very alert and swift, the chameleon creeps by fractions of an inch. Well, the story goes that in the beginning of the world God sent a messenger of life to men and commissioned the chameleon to carry it. Afterwards he sent a message of death to men by the swift running lizard. The lizard far outran the crawling chameleon, whose message of life, when at last it arrived, was simply laughed at. And so, say the Africans, that is why death is in the world. When I heard them tell that story out in Central Africa, I said, "No wonder they say such things to our shame, for 1900 years have passed since God's message of life was given in Jesus Christ and it has not reached many of these poor Africans even yet."—J. H. Morrison.

How Two Missionaries Won a Recruit. Mrs. Vincent was in a desperate case. She was a young wife, a mother with a baby, and her husband was sick with typhoid fever on their Indian mission four hundred miles into the wilderness. Fever had also stricken the inmates at the trading post three miles away, and she could expect no help from there. The only other people near by were Indians, and they feared to approach the fever-stricken house.

Among them was Mamoose, a medicine man of evil reputation, who had shown his antagonism to the missionary in no uncertain manner. Now, however, in her deepest need Mamoose came and offered his services to the missionary's wife. At first she shrank from him.

The shrewd Mamoose read her thoughts. "Me be all right," he said. "Your man, he get good care."

"Will you do just what I tell you?" asked Mrs. Vincent in desperation, for the crisis in the fever was approaching.

"Ah-ha," said the Indian. "Just what you say. Mamoose watch him good."

Whatever else Mamoose was, he was clean and neat, and moreover he respected the wishes of the missionary's wife and served her with meticulous faithfulness. In the terrible days that followed Mrs. Vincent wondered at the Indian's care, patience and fidelity. When the crisis was past and the missionary was regaining his strength Mamoose quietly returned to his wigwam.

After Mr. Vincent's first service in the mission church since his illness Mamoose approached him. "Join your church, me, Mamoose," said he, dramatically pointing to his breast and then to the church.

The missionary was astounded. "I know what we owe you, Mamoose," he said gratefully, "but you have always opposed my teaching. How comes it you wish to join now?"

"Me help little; you help Mamoose much," said the Indian. "Mamoose, pagan, dark-minded as you say, stubborn, proud. He say white man's religion good for white man—good for the bright day. Now I go see what he do when he be sick. Mamoose see. He heard you in all your wild talk. All good. He see you and the little Ookenmasquao [the missionary's wife] in the dark days. All good. Mamoose want your God to help him, sick or well. Me join now, and you pray God Mamoose be good Christian man."

It was with great joy that the missionary and his wife received Mamoose into the fold. In the years that followed his faith and sincerity were matched only by his zeal for service and for knowledge.—The Youth's Companion.

Are You a Missionary? Grenfell tells a story of how, at a dinner, given in his honor, a lady remarked to him, "Is it true that you are a missionary?" "Isn't it true that you are?" was the unexpected reply. Do we ever stop to think of it? For that is just what we all are—missionaries—sent into the world by God to testify of his love. That is what the word "missionary" means—one sent. Perhaps some of us are unfaithful missionaries, who have refused to deliver the message given to us, but we are truly sent for all that. Not everyone that is so sent is called upon to preach audibly. The daily conduct of life may be the best of sermons—what we are may count more than what we say.

When Admiral Foote was in Siam he invited the royal dignitaries to a dinner on his vessel. As soon as the guests were seated at the table, he, as was his invariable custom, asked a blessing upon the food. The king, in surprise, said he thought only missionaries asked blessings. "True," replied the Admiral quietly, "but every Christian is a missionary."—The Sunday School Chronicle.

Dr. Grenfell

Sentence Sermons. We cannot believe in Christ for ourselves without believing in him for the world.—Phillips Brooks.

As the Father hath sent me, I send you.—Jesus.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What does "made trial of him" mean, verse 25? 2. Where was Jericho, and for what was the neighborhood noted? 3. Why did Jesus speak of going down to Jericho? 4. What did it cost the Samaritan to be neighborly? 5. Did you ever fail to help another because it was too much trouble? 6. What was the purpose of Jesus in giving his Parable of the Good Samaritan? 7. What lessons has the parable for us? 8. How can we obey the command to go and do likewise?

LESSON X—MARCH 8

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

GOLDEN TEXT: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Leviticus 19.18

LESSON Luke 10.25-37 DEVOTIONAL READING Matthew 5.38-48

LUKE 10.25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and made trial of him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? 26 And he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? 27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. 28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. 29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor? 30 Jesus made answer and said. A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, 34 and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on "them" oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 And on the morrow he took out two shillings, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee. 36 Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers? 37 And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Law of Love to God and Man, verses 25-28. One time a scribe, an expert student and expounder of Hebrew law, sought to test Jesus by asking him a hard question. "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" he queried, and by this he meant, What acts, such as fasts and prayers and sacrifices, would have special merit and would therefore be rewarded by life eternal? "What is written in the law? How readest thou?" thus Jesus bade him answer his own question. The scribe then quoted Deuteronomy 6.5 and Leviticus 19.18: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind (i.e., with all thy powers); and thy neighbor as thyself. That Jesus united the two, love for God and love for one's neighbor, is not surprising, but that the Scribe does so causes one to surmise that it was brought about by some remark of Jesus which is not recorded. "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live," said Jesus.

> "Oh, runs not thus the lesson thou hast taught?
> When life's all love, 'tis life; aught else, 'tis naught" (Lanier).

What it means to love man, the parable that follows explains, but what does it mean to love God? Dr. Frederick W. Robertson says that it can mean only one thing; God is Character, and to love God is to love character. For instance, God is Purity, and to be pure is to love God. God is Love, and to love men is to love God. God is Truth, and to live a brave, true, real life, that is to love God. So Whittier in one of his letters wrote: "I have no consciousness of loving God as a Person or Power apart from his attributes. I have no experience or ecstatic emotions, but I know that I love goodness and mercy, charity and peace; that my soul longs for harmony and moral symmetry; that I would sooner wrong myself than my neighbor; and, at times, the sweet sense of an Infinite love overwhelms me and fills me with gratitude and thanksgiving."

II. The Application of the Law: The Parable of the Good Samaritan, verses 29-36. The scribe wished to show that he had not asked a question so simple that it could be thus easily disposed of, and said, "And who is my neighbor?" See Light from Oriental Life.

"Whenever you find yourself asking, 'Who is my neighbor?' you may be

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THE GOOD SAMARITAN

sure that something is wrong in your own heart. You are lacking in the true spirit of neighborliness, or you are falling from the grace of neighborliness. What you need is not information, but transformation; not to discover the limit of your duty, but to be filled with the love that knows no limit" (George Henry Hubbard).

In answer, Jesus gave that best known of all his parables, the Parable of the Good Samaritan. A man on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho was attacked by robbers, who beat him, took away his clothes, and left him half-dead by the roadside. A priest and then a Levite, both men held in honor, came that way, beheld the poor man, and passed by on the other side. Whatever love for God they might claim, they had no love for man. Had the victim been a member of their own class, perhaps they would have gone to his assistance, but he was only an unknown man who had no claim upon them. Dean French gives voice to the excuses they may have made to themselves: "Where one outrage had happened there was danger of another; the robbers could not be far distant and might return at any moment; the sufferer was doubtless beyond all human help; one found near him might himself be accused of murder. The priest may have said he could not tarry; the services of the temple could not wait; and why should he? Was not the Levite just behind? And the Levite in his turn may have thought within himself that it could not be incumbent on him to undertake a perilous office from which the priest had just shrunk."

"How like them are too many among us, who, from mere dislike of having our ordinary comfortable course of life disturbed, miss countless opportunities for usefulness! Consider the intense indignation of the Master, which this parable reveals, against such a listless, apathetic attitude toward human need" (Harry Emerson Fosdick).

A Samaritan, (whom priest and Levite and the lawyer who was questioning Jesus would despise because he was a Samaritan), arrived on the scene and was moved with compassion for the man. He bound up the victim's wounds, poured on them the usual palliative oil and wine, put him upon his own donkey and walked by his side to the inn. That night he took care of the man, and the next day he gave the landlord of the inn money enough to care for the man's necessities for several days, promising to reimburse him further should there be any additional expense.

"Inn of the Good Samaritan" on the Road to Jericho

There was no thought here of any return for all he had done for the man. "Neighborliness that expects a return is not the neighborliness of the Good Samaritan."

"'Whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.' With these words he starts on his journey, but he carries in his heart a burden of responsibility. He is not through with that battered waif whom he has rescued."

"A great deal of modern charity lacks that added touch, the something extra, of a thoughtful love. We make our contributions, dole out our alms, and that is the end of it. We do not trouble ourselves to get acquainted with the facts, and we are supremely indifferent as to the results. The genial ministry of the two pence would mean a great deal in the drudgery of many a tired worker's life" (Donald Sage Mackay).

"Which of the three, thinkest thou, proved neigbor unto him that fell among robbers?" Jesus questioned of the lawyer who was testing him. The form of his question shows that the important point in life is not who is my neighbor? but, To whom can I prove myself a neighbor, whom can I help?

"He that showed mercy on him," the lawyer answered. "He will not name the Samaritan by name, the haughty hypocrite" (Martin Luther).

"Go, and do thou likewise," counseled Jesus. You want more love, love of God and love of neighbor, and the best way to gain more of it is to practice it.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

What Is Written in the law, verse 26. In the Old Testament there were such multitudes of commandments that the conscience was perplexed among them; and the confusion was worse confounded by the subtleties of the rabbis, who, in their zeal to put, as they phrased it, a hedge about the Law, had split up every commandment into a dozen or a score. Then they exercised their ingenuity in determining which of these belong to the first, which to the second rank of importance, and so on.—James Stalker.

And who is my neighbor, verse 29. This was an oft-debated question among the rabbis. To a Jew only a Jew was really a "neighbor." "He excepts all Gentiles, when he saith, 'his neighbor,'" said the rabbis. Said Maimonides: "The Gentiles, among whom and us there is no war, and so those that are keepers of sheep amongst the Israelites, and the like—we are not to contrive their death: but if they be in any danger of death, we are not bound to deliver them. If any of them fall into the sea, you shall not need to take them out; for it is said, Thou shalt not rise up against the blood of thy neighbor; but such a one is not thy neighbor."

Pouring on them oil and wine, verse 34. It is interesting to read that in the Chinese language the verb "to heal" is represented by two characters, the upper one meaning to smite or wound with an arrow, and the lower part meaning wine or spirits, which is poured upon the wound to heal it.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

This parable is told only by Luke, and it immediately follows the account of the return of The Seventy. The lawyer's question and answer, which introduce the parable, resemble the account given by both Matthew and Mark of a lawyer's interview with Jesus on the day of controversy during the last week in Jerusalem. Probably they are not to be identified, the one with the other: the same subject may have been discussed on different occasions.

The parable speaks of "going down" from Jerusalem to Jericho. Jerusalem is on the tableland of Judea, two thousand five hundred feet above the sea, and Jericho, twenty miles distant, is in the deep trench of the Jordan valley, nine hundred feet below sea level. The way to Jericho was uninhabited and was notorious for such brigands as the parable mentions; Jerome says it was called "the bloody way."

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Notice that when the lawyer questioned, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus did not argue with him. Nor did he give him a definition over which the lawyer could quibble. Instead he described a situation which aptly portrayed the deed of a neighbor. Opportunity for a similar practice comes often to a teacher. Go, and do thou likewise.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE STEWARDSHIP OF LIFE

Beginning the Lesson. As a rule, do you follow the dictations of your first thoughts or of your second thoughts? Do you have an impulse to do a kindly deed which you fail to execute because of second thoughts that counsel prudence?

F. W. Boreham has a delightful essay upon Second Thoughts. He begins by saying that the man who can keep ahead of his second thoughts is sure of the Kingdom of God. Then he contrasts the Levite and the Good Samaritan in the

way they reacted to their second thoughts. The Levite crossed the road to the sufferer's relief, and then paused. When he had heard the moan a generous impulse had been born within his breast, but the second thoughts tore the kindly impulse from his grasp; with merciless hands they killed it on the spot. When the Good Samaritan paused, as the Levite before him had paused, a troop of second thoughts sprang upon him also, but he fought for his purpose so tenaciously that the second thoughts were scattered and the heroic deed was actually accomplished.

"The finer feelings invariably express themselves through the medium of first thoughts; it is the more sordid and selfish sides of my nature that reveal themselves when the second thoughts arrive. In reality, the lightning and the thunder occur simultaneously. But the flash of the one is seen immediately, while the rumble of the other is only heard after an appreciable interval. Conscience expresses itself like the lightning, instantaneously; the mutterings of reason and self-interest, like the thunder, come lumbering along later.

"It has been said that the men who, in the great war-days, won the Victoria Cross, won it by yielding to the impulses of the moment. Thousands of others were similarly situated, and felt that same sudden and sublime inspiration. But, unfortunately, they hesitated. During that momentary spasm of uncertainty a multitude of second thoughts surged in upon their minds; those second thoughts were, without exception, thoughts of caution, of safety, and of self-interest; and, as a result, the splendid deed was never done and the coveted distinction never won.

"If ever I become a king, or a dictator, or a president, or anything of that kind, I shall establish a special Order of Merit, to be conferred upon men and women who contrive to conquer their second thoughts whenever their second thoughts threaten the realization of their best selves. The badge of the Order will consist of a representation of the Good Samaritan."

What the Samaritan Might Have Said. This story would have been very different if the Samaritan had seen the trouble and said, "When I reach home I must send a check to the Relief Corps for Wounded Travelers": or if he had simply determined to get a ringing resolution passed at the next meeting of the association, denouncing "these Bedouin atrocities"; or if he had consumed all his philanthropic zeal in writing "an open letter" to the paper on the laxity of police regulations on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho. In the meantime, the poor, wounded, half-dead traveler would have been dead altogether. What the Good Samaritan did was to take personal care of the needy man; after that the check, the open letter, the resolutions might be very well.—Charles R. Brown, in The Master's Way.

The Stewardship of Life. The priest and Levite may have felt that it was not their business to stop and help. They could easily think of others whose business it was rather than theirs. They might be willing to report the case to a Travelers' Aid Society, but beyond that they were not concerned. This is an easy and ready way of evading calls for help. Millions of people use it every day. Yet such an attitude always shows an utter lack of the Christian spirit of love. All through his teachings, and supremely in this parable, Jesus insisted that all human need is our business to the extent of our power. That is just what the Kingdom of God on earth means: that men shall recognize each other as brothers and care for their brothers' welfare and need. With this truth of Jesus in mind, consider some of the duties which may be your particular business: protection of life and property, protection of health, protection of morals, religious education, protection of women and children from exploitation, care of the sick, the delinquent, the criminal, provision of safe and wholesome recreation. Which of these matters are you making your business? If you are not concerned with any of them, how do you differ from the priest and the Levite?—Halford E. Luccock, in Studies in The Parables of Jesus.

Share Some Advantage that Is Yours with Some One who Needs it. Where in these days do you find the counterpart of this poor traveler? It may not be some one in actual physical distress. Perhaps it is an unfortunate friend who is having a hard time to get along, or some one wounded and robbed by heredity, whom our advantage can help.

One of the greatest dangers today is that of living a life so sheltered and so busy that we never see the man in need. It was said of Goethe that "he kept well out of sight of stripped and wounded and half-dead men." He found such things unpleasant, and so lived his life in sheltered places. It is surprising how easy it is to live out of sight of suffering even in a great city where there is so much. One can live in a fine section of town, moving among "nice" people, belong to a pleasant church, and never feel the twinge of pain or misery or see the anguish of pain or the squalor of poverty. Because it does not come on our daily beaten track we forget that it exists. And in that sheltered, thoughtless ease lies the chief reason that the world still contains after two thousand years of Christ so much unrelieved pain and want.—Halford E. Luccock, in Studies in The Parables of Jesus.

Reverence for Life. Dr. Schweitzer, that many-sided man—philosopher, theologian, physician and surgeon, missionary, musician—asks in one of his books, "What is wrong with modern civilization, and how can it be put right?" His answer is what he calls reverence for life. "Reverence for life does not allow me to appropriate my own happiness," he explains. "At moments I should like to enjoy myself without a care, but it brings before me thoughts of the misery I have seen or surmised. An uncomfortable doctrine prompts in whispered words, 'You are happy, therefore you are called on to give up much.' Whatever you have received more than others in health and talents, in ability and success, in harmonious surroundings, all this you must not take to yourself as a matter of course. In some way or other we must all live as men for men. Open your eyes and look for some man, or some work for the sake of men, which needs a little time and a little friendship, a little sympathy, a little sociability. Perhaps it is a lonely person, or an embittered person, or an inefficient person, to whom you can be of help. Who can reckon all the ways in which that priceless fund of redeeming impulse is capable of exploitation? Therefore search and see if there is some place in which you can invest your humanity."

Noblesse Oblige. In the great days of chivalry in the Middle Ages men said "Noblesse oblige." That meant (under the feudal system, for example) that a noble because of his great position and privileges had his obligations: he must act on a high standard of duty, of courtesy, of service, such as was put into the two great German words taken over by the English Prince of Wales in the Middle Ages as his motto—"Ich dien"—"I serve."

This law runs all through life. God makes us all stewards in great and less degree. There is no one without some capacity, some privileges, some power of mind or body, of knowledge or money, or surroundings or position. We are simply expected to do the best we can with what we have; to use the gifts God has given to us in his service and for that of his children, and not for our own sheer selfish pleasure. As a matter of fact there is no joy to beat the joy of doing the thing we can do at the very topmost pitch of our powers. Yet in every country of the world fellows are making their privileges the foundation for thinking that they are "superior" and for making the very central aim of their life "to have a good time" themselves, whatever happens to any one else.

While there are in this world diseases still unconquered, races oppressed, children going half-straved or in rags or being exploited for gain, war-makers building up armaments; while there is truth undiscovered or not taught, God's beauty in nature or in man unsung or unpainted, or while goodness is smirched, and virtue persecuted, to go out for what is called "a good time" is just to play traitor to the Master, the Prince, who has given us our stewardship. And he has given the stewardship of powers to us all. We can all train ourselves to teach or write, manufacture goods, heal, speak or organize, swing an ax or drive a plow, lay good drains, or paint good pictures, think straight good thoughts or pray strong prayers. Noblesse Oblige.—Basil Mathews.

Use the Resources you Have. No man is blamed for being a fourteen-foot catboat instead of a steam yacht or an Atlantic liner. It is only required of him that he have up whatever sail he carries and be headed right. This simplifies the whole matter and makes the path of duty plain. How much energy and wisdom, how much goodness and spiritual efficiency have you? "Not much," you say. No matter, bring it along.

There is a false self-distrust which denies the worth of its own talent. It is not humility—it is petty pride, withholding its simple gifts from the hands of Christ because they are not more pretentious. There are men who would endow colleges, they say, if they were millionaires. They would help in the work of Bible study if they were as gifted as Henry Drummond. They would strive to lead their associates into the Christian life if they had the gifts of Dwight L. Moody. But they are not ready to give what they have and do what they can and be as it has pleased God to make them, in his service—and that is their condemnation.—Condensed from The Unrealized Possibilities in Life, by Charles Reynolds Brown.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. Life is given to no man as a lasting possession but merely for use.—Lucretius.

2. Who are the "neighbors" of our church school, and what is our responsibility in regard to them? Sydney Smith asserts that if he were to declare that A was in trouble, B would instantly reply, "C ought to go and help him." Are any of us B?

3. Our duty as a nation to be a good neighbor of other nations.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What home problems are illustrated in the account about Martha and Mary. and how can they be solved? 2. Are women who are cumbered with much serving easy to live with? 3. Why was Jesus so severe in his denunciation of the Pharisees? 4. Which sins are more numerous in your ledger—those of commission or omission? 5. What verse in Micah is recalled by 11.42? 6. What did Jesus mean by his words of 11.44? 7. 11.46? 8. Who are the modern representatives of those lawyers and Pharisees?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

SERVING AND SHARING

Beginning the Lesson. "We are all of us either robbers, or priests and Levites, or Good Samaritans." Do you believe this statement? Do we not either harm others, pass others by in difficulty, or serve them and share with them? Does not our Christianity lie in the disposition of the heart, and is not our disposition of the heart revealed in our attitude toward another in need? With this thought in mind, let us discuss this parable of the Good Samaritan which we know so well.

A Samaritan of Today

Why He Is Called the Good Samaritan. Jesus speaks of this man only as "a certain Samaritan." Yet over all the world he is called The Good Samaritan, and no one has ever objected to the title. It is the right name for him. But why do we think so?

One reason is found in what he was not. He was no "Passer-by." There were passers-by in his day and on that very road. Priest and Levite and perhaps others looked at the prostrate figure and passed on. There are men and women and boys and girls of the same sort today. They never stop their pleasures or journeys to help any one. They may see the doctor going day after day to a house in their street, but they never stop to see if there is anything they can do to help.

Another reason is found in what he was. And what was he? We don't know how he looked nor what he wore, but we do know that he was tender-hearted, sympathetic, unselfish, generous. We say that the pen, or pencil, or knife is "good" because of its quality: we say of a harvest that it is "a good harvest" because it is not only plentiful but of a fine quality. And

this man was made of fine stuff. He had some of the great Christian virtues, though he was only a Samaritan.

Another reason is found in what he did. The moment he caught sight of that form in the road he stopped and went to see what was the matter. Thieves might have been lurking in the neighborhood ready to pounce upon him. The man might have been suffering from some infectious disease. But if these thoughts occurred to the Samaritan, he thrust them away. The man was suffering and he went to his help. He gave him first aid, put him on his ass, and took him to the inn to be nursed back to health. We have heard of more heroic deeds. During the war soldiers went out again and again under machine gun fire to bring in their wounded comrades. But if we cannot call the Samaritan's deed heroic it was nevertheless fine. There was courage in it, too, as well as the spirit of brotherliness and self-sacrifice for others.

Another reason is found in the way he did it. Some people have no tact nor skill in helping others. They are clumsy or careless. They are sometimes grumpy and grumble about the foolishness of the one who gets into trouble. The Samaritan was cheerful, prompt, skillful, thoughtful and thorough. He did everything that he could do, and he did it with his own hands. His was a personal service. His conduct was so fine that it has always been looked upon as an example for every one since then, and that is why we call him The Good Samaritan.

One Who Loved his Neighbor. In an Adult Bible Class Magazine there is an account of an accident which sent to the hospital for three weeks a young high school lad. His school fellows heard of it, all of whom knew how poor he was, and all were sorry. But it was Clarence, the son of the wealthiest man in town, who did not stop with idle pity. He went at once to Jack's home. He found Jack's mother hobbling across the yard on her crutches. Clarence expressed his sympathy and asked how she was going to get along during Jack's absence. She answered that she did not know, as the walk she had just taken to the chicken-yard was her longest in years, and there was the cow to get and milk and the pig to feed. Clarence told her he would do Jack's chores, though he had never milked a cow in his life; for three weeks he did what he could to take Jack's place. As the story was finally dragged out of him, he concluded with the remark, "Gee, but it was tough cleaning the pig-pen."

Our Responsibility. What does the word "responsibility" mean? Let us divide it into its component parts: respond—ability, ability to respond. We are not responsible for the welfare of another if we have absolutely no ability to respond to his needs, but we shall be surprised, if we think carefully about it, to find our ability in many a need is far greater than we have supposed.

For us the "certain man" of our parable is the one for whose welfare we have the ability to do something, the one we have it in our power to help, whether he lives in the same house with us, next door to us, or on the other side of the globe.

Jacob Riis has told the story of a rich man who asked him to find a poor widow with five children the ages of his own children, that the two families might be mutually helpful to each other. He wished each of his children to be interested in another child that was growing up along with him. Mr. Riis searched long for the right family, and at last found it in an east-side tenement. The brave mother was supporting her large family by scrubbing in an office building. And where was that building? It was the very building where this rich man had his office, and it was his own floor where she worked!

"There's that class of Italian girls," Jessica said to her sister (as told in The Youth's Companion). "You could do beautifully with them, if you just would Don't you see what a chance it is to do something really patriotic—to teach them to be real citizens? Why don't you say you will? You'll find other things will fall into place if once you resolve that they shall."

"I—I'll think about it," said Peggy uncertainly.

With that Jessica had to content herself. Down in the hall she hurried by Olga, the new Swedish maid. Olga's eyes were red, but Jessica was too busy to notice.

It was Peggy who, coming down stairs a quarter of an hour later, did notice.

"Why, Olga," she cried, "what's the matter? Didn't you understand that you could go out for the afternoon?"

Olga shook her head. "I tank not go. In stores laugh. I don't like laugh."

Peggy stood still, thinking it out. "You mean you want to buy something?" she asked. "And you don't like to go to the stores to ask for it?"

"I tank," Olga repeated as her fair face reddened, "I not go."

An hour later, Jessica, trying on shoes in Gregory's while at the same time she discussed club finances with her friend, Flo Hastings, looked up at Flo's sudden exclamation. "Why, Jessica, isn't that your sister helping that Swedish girl buy shoes? You didn't tell me that she was in the work, too. I should think she would be fine. Isn't she making that girl have a good time—just buying shoes!"

"She—why, that's our new Swedish maid," Jessica answered hurriedly. "Peggy isn't doing anything at the club. She says she hasn't the time. What do you think of these shoes, Flo?"

"Lovely," Flo replied in a perfunctory manner. She was watching Peggy, and thinking one or two new thoughts.

Sharing his Time and his Skill. Several years ago a Barnsley doctor had amongst his patients a lad in a poverty-stricken home, who was so ill that it was necessary to pay a special visit every morning at 7:30. One morning the doctor encountered the then Rector of Barnsley, already a man of crowded life, on his way to catch the early train. After the usual courtesies the rector learned the reason of the doctor's early visit, and then continued his way to the station.

The next morning the doctor paid his usual early call and found the lad grasping a postcard which was grubby with the marks of his hot fingers. The postcard bore a sketch of two mad dogs engaged in a terrible conflict. Excitedly the boy showed it to the doctor with the remark, "My neighbor drew this for me." The next morning there was another drawing of a man on a runaway bicycle, and every morning the doctor had to inspect a new sketch. As the boy lingered, there slowly grew a picture gallery round the bedroom wall, each card bearing some scene of quick, humorous action. When the boy died, his mother gathered them and placed them among her most treasured possessions.

Then the doctor heard the story. Every morning since his meeting with the rector there had been another caller at that poor home, and the rector had sat at the boy's bedside drawing with wonderful skill some living picture on a plain postcard. When the boy had looked up at him and asked, "Who are you?" the rector had replied every time, "I am your neighbor." So it happened that as the lad lingered in pain and restlessness he was ever comforted by the thought that the morning would bring another visit from "his neighbor."—The British Weekly.

A Prayer.

Lord. let not my religion be
A thing of selfish ecstasy;
But something warm with tender care
And fellowship which I can share.
Let me not walk the other side
Of trouble's highway long and wide;
Make me a Good Samaritan,
And neighbor unto every man.—Clarence Mills Burkholder

Sentence Sermons. "A good neighbor is always alive to the opportunity of doing good."

If there be some weaker one,
Give me strength to help him on.—Whittier.

It is a great thing given by God to be in a position to do good to others.—Cyprian.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What did Jesus once say about his having no home? (Mt. 8.20) 2. Whose home did he often visit? 3. Where did Martha and Mary live? 4. How did they differ in the way they received Jesus as a Friend? 5. What does "cumbered about much serving" mean? 6. What did Jesus mean by his words in 10.42? 7. How can we prove our friendship for Jesus?

LESSON XI—MARCH 15

JESUS AMONG FRIENDS AND FOES

GOLDEN TEXT: Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you. John 15.14

LESSON Luke 10.38 to 11.54 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 86.1-7

LUKE 10.38 Now as they went on their way, he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet, and heard his word. 40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving; and she came up to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. 41 But the Lord answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things: 42 but one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

LUKE 11.42 But woe unto you Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and every herb, and pass over justice and the love of God: but these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. 43 Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the chief seats in the synagogues, and the salutations in the marketplaces. 44 Woe unto you! for ye are as the tombs which appear not, and the men that walk over "them" know it not.

45 And one of the lawyers answering saith unto him, Teacher, in saying this thou reproachest us also. 46 And he said, Woe unto you lawyers also! for ye load men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

52 Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye took away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

53 And when he was come out from thence, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press upon "him" vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things: 54 laying wait for him to catch something out of his mouth.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. Martha's and Mary's Friendship for Jesus, 10.34-42. Jesus was a frequent Guest at Bethany in the home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary. On one occasion Mary was sitting at his feet and listening eagerly to his words, when Martha, troubled about the preparation of the meal, came and said impatiently to Jesus, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me." Can you not see how troubled she was, and how unjustly she felt that she was being treated? So intense was her feeling that she rebuked her sister in the presence of their Guest, and in asking him if he did not care about her overwork, she rebuked him also.

Jesus tenderly repeated her name, "Martha, Martha," thus showing his care for her, and then gently chided her, "thou art anxious and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful." Moffatt's translation reads, "one dish alone is necessary." Both sisters were wont to sit at Jesus' feet (note the word "also," verse 39); and according to Moffatt's translation we may assume that both helped to prepare the meal, but Mary returned, thinking the fare prepared adequate. Martha, on the other hand, wished to serve a more pretentious dinner—one of many dishes—in order better to honor the Lord. The whole point of Jesus' words to her, then, was to warn her against herself. He did not wish his visit to turn her into a drudge. He desired her also to sit at his feet and learn.

> "If you had seen Martha you would frequently have said of her doings, 'She would do more if she did less!' The woman was overwrought. The busiest mother will do amazingly well for herself if she will withdraw from the ardent demands of the domestic circle and have ten minutes with her Lord. 'But I have so much to do!' I know all about it, but you will do them better for the apparent waste. Deep communion gives us the power of fine action. It conveys to the soul a calm assurance of God. The nerves are soothed and calmed and the soul is stilled" (J. H. Jowett).

"For Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." "Not yours in bustling about, Martha, but hers is 'the good part' of ministering, not to my body's but to my spirit's need for sympathy and under-

standing. It will not be taken from her now by my bidding her to help you, and it is of such a character that she will never lose it." Mary's gift was not so much sympathy as the power to detect in those whom she met what was the main thing to be sympathized with" (George Matheson).

"Speak low to me, my Savior, low and sweet
From out the hallelujahs, sweet and low,
Lest I should fear and fall, and miss thee so
Who are not missed by any that entreat—
Speak to me as to Mary at thy feet" (Mrs. Browning).

II. Lessons upon Prayer, 11.1-13.

III. The Divided Kingdom, 11.14-26.

IV. The Truly Blessed, 11.27, 28.

V. The Sign from Heaven Refused, 11.29-32.

VI. Darkness and Light, 11.33-36.

VII. Woes Pronounced upon Pharisees and Scribes, 11.37-54. The Pharisees accused Jesus of neglecting in one instance to follow certain prescribed directions about cleansing the hands before eating, and then he turned the tables upon them and showed that they, not in one instance alone but in their very mode of life, were continually guilty of what was truly evil. They were zealous in keeping man-made laws about cleansing, but they failed to heed the divine laws against extortion: and they laid great stress on externalities, sought to present an exemplary outward conduct, but their inward spirit was evil. "Woe unto you Pharisees!" Jesus exclaimed, "for you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and pass over judgment and the love of God." They were scrupulously exact in giving the tenth of their income, even of the homely herbs that grew in their garden. Some rabbis, we are told, tithed not only the seeds but the stalks and leaves of these herbs, although in the Talmud rue was especially exempted from tithing. They attached great importance to trifles, but neglected the great essentials of justice and love to God. Jesus seems to have had in mind Micah 6.8. These ye ought to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Ruskin's counsel was not to trouble oneself about what one ought not to do, but about what one ought to do. Sins of omission are often far worse in their evil effects than sins of commission, and are usually more frequent. The tithing of mint and rue does not release one from the duty of doing justice and loving God. The magnifying of one duty at the expense of others is a common error. One who accomplishes a great civic work but neglects his family; one who is engrossed in domestic duties to the neglect of her church; one whose mind is so filled with the claims of one's own duty as to forget other equally important duties, deserves this rebuke of Jesus.

"Woe unto you Pharisees!" for you care more for the homage of men—the chief seats in synagogues, the salutations in the market places—than for the approbation of God. The seats in the synagogue held to be the chief ones were around the ark and facing the congregation.

"Woe unto you! for ye are as the tombs which appear not, and the men that walk over them know it not." "Contact with sepulchers defiled, so that the Jews smeared them with limewash yearly on the fifteenth day of Adar lest travelers touching them unawares should be made unclean. Jesus compares the Pharisees to unwashed sepulchers because they defiled those who came into close contact with them" (Dummelow).

And one of the lawyers (scribes) answering saith unto him, "Teacher, in saying this thou reproachest us also." The scribes were the expounders of the Law which the Pharisees so scrupulously observed.

Then Jesus pronounced his woe upon the lawyers also, "for ye load men with burdens grievous to be borne," by adding to the written Law many minute and troublesome laws which they declared more important than the Law itself, Mt. 15.21. "And ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers." Either they themselves did not observe these rules which they

required of others, or the meaning here is that "they will not stretch out a finger to adjust these legal burdens to the backs of others, so that they may comfortably bear them." See Light from Oriental Life.

"Woe unto you lawyers! for ye took away the Key of Knowledge," that is, the key which opened the door to knowledge of how to enter the Kingdom of God. Not only would they not enter, but they prevented others from entering that Kingdom.

Scribes and Pharisees crowded about Jesus and vainly endeavored to make him say something that they could use against him.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Woe unto you Pharisees! 11.42. Rabbi J. Leonard Levy explains that all Pharisees were not like those whom Jesus denounced. He says:

"In Jesus' day there were seven classes of Pharisees in Palestine; six of these are described in the Talmud as men of more than ordinary piety. In fact, Pharisee Jews represented the very pride and flower of the highest religious, ethical and spiritual culture in ancient Israel. This may be news to many, but it is true, nevertheless. The Pharisees included in their number men who, for genuine piety and purity, for ethical idealism and moral purpose, might serve as fine examples to the age and land in which we live. But there was a seventh class, called in the Talmud "S'bhu'im," Dyed, who bore the same relation to the true Pharisee as a woman's dyed hair and painted face bear toward the natural objects which God gave her. Unfortunately, this class has been taken as the type of all Pharisees—a conclusion as unwarranted and unjust as it is untruthful. The seventh class of Pharisees are as bitterly censured by all Jews as they were by Jesus; and when he denounced and called them 'a generation of vipers,' 'whited sepulchers,' and 'hypocrites,' he only repeated what other Jews thought of those graceless and ungodly dissemblers."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Luke alone records this incident at the home of Martha and Mary and gives it without any definite reference to time. It follows immediately the giving of the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

It was at a dinner in the home of a Pharisee to which Jesus was invited, that the woes were pronounced. The place and time are not told. Most of the words here recorded are given by Matthew in chapter twenty-three, in Jesus' last denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees, but without the occasion for the utterances which Luke mentions. No doubt Jesus was forced to repeat such charges more than once. The denunciations of verses 42-51 may have been added here by Luke while upon the subject of Jesus' condemnation of the Pharisees, and yet have been uttered by Jesus, not while he was being entertained by a Pharisee, but after open hostility had been declared by the Pharisees.

Bethany, the home of Martha and Mary, is two miles from Jerusalem on the southeastern slope of the Mount of Olives, facing the Dead Sea and the Jordan. Only a few huts mark the site today. An arch and a portion of an enclosure is given the name of the home of Mary and Martha.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

"What a brave companion we have got," said Faithful to Christian concerning Talkative. But Christian knew Talkative better. "His house is as empty of religion as the white of an egg is of savor," said Christian; "men that have had any dealings with him say it is better to deal with a Turk than with him."

Woe unto Talkative, Woe unto scribe or Pharisee or teacher who teaches but does not practice what he teaches! Jesus hated hypocrisy, or sham, of every sort. He lived what he taught. His life is the best illustration we can find of every principle of living which he uttered.

"If you want me to weep, there must be tears in your own eyes. If you want me to believe, you yourself must be aflame with conviction which has penetrated to the very marrow of your bones," declares a great religious teacher. "And so, I take it, the first requisition for power with others is that

we shall have this unvarying firmness of grasp of clearly apprehended truths, and unflinching boldness of devotion to them."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

DEALING WITH FRIEND AND FOE

Beginning the Lesson. One of Zona Gale's characters says of another character in Friendship Village: "Miss Toplady ain't one o' them turtle women that their houses is shells on 'em, burden to back. She's more the bird kind —neat little nest under, an' wings to be used every day, somewheres in the blue." It is usually customary to think of Martha as a "turtle woman" and of Mary as "the bird kind." Dr. Davis does better justice to both of them in these terse words:

"Martha has been censured too severely in our thoughtless judgment. She was not a mere bustling fretter. She was a successful home-maker, and her activity was the substance out of which the domestic happiness was largely wrought. She merely got her proportions wrong. It is a common fault. Mary has been held up as the stirring example of the reflective mind, as if she did not also know how to cook and serve a good dinner. Mary was thoughtful,

Jesus at the Home of Martha and Mary. The Painting by Henri Semiradsky is in the Museum at Petrograd

but there is no indication that she was either idle or in the way. She seems to have been one of those persons who balance the vision and the task well in daily life."

The point of the story for us today is that Martha, who got her proportions wrong, and Mary, who balanced hers rightly, were among the truest friends that Jesus had, and their home was one where he was always gladly welcomed. And Whittier is right in saying:

> When he who, sad and weary, longing sore
> For love's sweet service, sought the sisters' door,
> One saw the heavenly, one the human Guest;
> But who shall say which loved the Master best?

A Modern Instance. There were once two college boys who stood listening one day to the most famous orator at that time in America. As they listened the orator broke into a flight of imaginative splendor which was one of the rare bursts of purest genius. One student remembered that the time had come

for a recitation; and reflecting that he was to be a minister and preach the duty of faithfulness, he broke from the orator's spell and went to his class. The other youth thought of the class, too, but he stayed, saying simply to himself that if he was to preach the gospel he ought to stay and see what genius could do at the top of its power. Which was right? The question is submitted, not as a problem in ethical casuistry, but for the light it throws on this passage in the Scriptures. The two women had before them the Supreme Life. One chose to serve that Life in the commonplace way, but the other saw the unusualness of the opportunity.—Francis J. McConnell.

Worship or service—which? Ah, that is best
To which he calls us, be it toil or rest;
To labor for him in life's busy stir,
Or seek his feet, a silent worshiper.—Caroline Atwater Mason.

Mary the Ideal Friend. "Perhaps the most prominent feature in this disciple was her unlimited power of loving. All disciples must be supposed to love their Lord, but all do not love him equally, either in the same way or to the same extent. Few love as she did, and so to the heart of Jesus she stood above them all. She was his ideal disciple, if one might call her so—the disciple whose love more nearly than any other's corresponded to what a disciple's love should be—a love in which there was no mingling of unworthy elements, as there was so often in the love even of a Peter and a John."

Dealing with Friend and with Foe. Martha was his friend, and the Pharisees were his enemies, and Jesus rebuked both. He rebuked them very differently, however. He looked at the will back of Martha's words and knew that she was true at heart. He looked at the will back of the Pharisees' deeds and knew them to be false through and through.

With Jesus it was ever a question of the will, and therein lies the principle in his differentiation in the treatment of sinners. With the poor, weak sinners, the men and women guilty of the coarse sins of gluttony and wine-bibbing, the publicans and the harlots, he was strangely gentle, while toward the self-sufficient, self-righteous hypocrites, the high churchmen who tithed trifles and passed over all that most mattered in the moral life, he was strangely stern—strangely only from our faulty point of view. For we find it difficult to draw the line between those who have faults but mean well and those that carry out the details of the law but mean ill. The "Gentle Jesus" of our hymns must not usurp the true portrait in the Gospels of a Perfect Character, as we are wisely warned. There is always a capacity for righteous anger in a perfectly developed soul.

Jesus Hated "Shamateurs." Jesus demanded absolute sincerity of thought, word, and deed. He hated hypocrisy and sham of every sort, disdained all outward show that was not in keeping with inward feeling, and was unscathing in his denunciation of the shams of the Pharisees and scribes of his day. Those Phariseees were shamateurs.

Is this "shamateur" a new word to you? You will not find it in the dictionary, but it seems to "fill a long-felt want," and befits such people as Jesus condemned so unsparingly. It is of recent English origin, and in England is used to characterize those afraid of being thought ignorant upon any subject, and who boldly discuss things about which they really know nothing, or undertake matters beyond their ken. Its meaning may well be broadened to include all who claim to be what they are not, who cleanse the outside of the cup and platter for the benefit of beholders, but whose hearts are full of wickedness.

Shamateuring is a common sin: the world is full of sham today. When the Empress Catherine of Russia planned to travel through her realm, her all-powerful favorite had the route prepared in advance for her coming. The country lying along either side he had decorated to some distance back from the road with representations of pleasant villages, prosperous farms, smiling fields and grazing herds, in order to deceive his ruler as to the true, desolate condition of the country. So moral hypocrites try to have an appearance of morality and religiousness, while their hearts are barren of goodness.

A seven-year-old girl had been playing with her dolls, but she stopped and sat quietly in "a brown study." Then looking up she said: "Mother, do you

know, I think that Jesus was the only One who ever dared to live his inside out!" She had discovered that he was the only one who never had occasion to be a hypocrite.

Why Jesus was so Patient with Imperfection and so Intolerant of Unreality. If he sees reality, we can well understand how he can be infinitely patient with littleness; for where he stands, eternity is all in sight. He sees forever. He knows through what summer of cloudless sunshine the least grace will have time to ripen to the richest.

How impressive this is in the story of Christ's earthly life! He could wait for a publican while he unsnarled himself out of the meshes of his low vocation, but he cut with a word like a sword through the solemn trifling of the Pharisees. He never was impatient with his disciples. Their graces were very small, but they were very real. Eternity was long, and he could wait till the graces which he saw to be real opened into all the possibility which he discerned in them; till the Peter who paraded his genuine but feeble resolution of devotion at the Supper grew to be the Peter who could die for him at Rome, and live with him in some high doing of his will in heaven.—From a Sermon, by Phillips Brooks.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. Is the tendency to overdo as much a fault as the tendency to neglect?

2. The severity of Jesus.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What do you say often to yourself when you are alone with yourself? 2. What does this talk that goes on within yourself tell you about yourself? 3. What should the man have said he would do with his surplus? 4. Why is the use of money spoken of as "the acid test of Christian character"? 5. What is the lesson of verses 47 and 48? 6. In what sense is Christ coming to each one of us every day?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS

Beginning the Lesson. Where is Bethany? Who lived there in the time of Christ? Their home was the nearest approach to the home that Jesus had during his public ministry. The Gospels often speak of his going there, and we know that during Holy Week he left Jerusalem every night for Bethany. Luke has told us of a conversation that took place one day in that home. What was it?

A missionary in China was making a distant tour and arrived about the middle of the forenoon at the home of some native Christians, thinking that he could spend a couple of helpful hours with them and then continue his journey. They were overjoyed to have a missionary in their home, and, wishing to do him honor, they left him to sit alone while they prepared an elaborate dinner. "They did not take the best way, and it was trying for me," said the missionary afterwards, "but I got new light on Mary and Martha." How so?

Treat Jesus as a Friend. A visitor is shown into the reception-room and no farther. A friend calls and is shown "right in," as we say; he takes us as we are, as he finds us, and we have no uncomfortable feeling about asking him to sit down with us to the plainest of fare. Now, I believe the great mistake Martha made that day when Jesus looked in upon that Bethany home was just this—that she treated him as a Visitor rather than a Friend. The great thing that Mary did that day was to take him for what he was. To me the supreme lesson of this incident is to learn the simple but profound fact that Jesus our Lord longs to be regarded by his own, not as the visitor, coming now and again to them, but as a Friend who desires their company above everything else in the world.—D. Ewart James.

The Martha Spirit. For many years Martha was a perplexity to me, but at last I've got her straightened out in my mind. Mrs. Alice Freeman Palmer helped me to do it. When I was a girl at Wellesley she used to come over sometimes and stay to lunch or dinner. At table she would frequently become so much interested in talking to the girls next her that she would scarcely see when a new course was set in front of her. Then suddenly realizing that

her plate was full, she would push it across the table to her husband. "You eat it, dear," she would say with her half-mischievous, wholly magnetic smile, and then turn back to the girls with whom she had been talking.

One day it flashed across me how much more a Mary hostess who wanted to be taught would mean to Mrs. Palmer than a Martha hostess who merely placed food in front of her could possibly mean. And if that circumstance was true of her, how much truer it must have been of Christ, who said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to accomplish his work."

Another glimpse of Martha's character came from an article in which the writer spoke of her as having not a sense of duty—that grand, big, exalting thing—but a sense of duties—the little niminy-piminy cares of everyday life. And the third glimpse was from Dr. Patterson, our dear old preacher at home. I sat beside him at a dinner the Pattersons were giving for a great preacher from Scotland. Observing the harassed face of his daughter at the other end of the table, and the perfunctory attention that she was giving to the guest of honor, Dr. Patterson whispered to me, "She needs the Master's message, doesn't she, that poor distracted daughter of mine? But one dish is needful, though perhaps the Martha spirit could never grasp that fact."—The Youth's Companion.

Jesus as Friend. The Youth's Companion gives an unusual conversation on a railroad train. A farmer entered the car with a basket of vegetables and, seeing an old man whom he knew, sat down to visit with him. Their conversation interested all around.

"I've had many troubles to carry, John," at length the old man said. "I know," returned John tenderly, "I know. I reckon we all have worries enough to pull us down in this world, if it wasn't for the hope given us by our Friend who has gone on before."

"Who is that?" sharply asked a boy who had been drinking.

"Why, my dear boy, don't you know? Jesus is the one Friend above all others," answered the farmer simply.

When the farmer rose to leave soon after, his aged friend said,

"Good-by, John, I may never see you again. I'm going down hill pretty fast. But I'm glad we met, and"—his voice sinking—"I'm glad you spoke of Jesus."

Woe unto you Pharisees, for ye Love the Chief Seats in the Synagogues. Some years ago a crowd of people stood in the vestibule of a large church, waiting to be seated. Those who were well dressed and prosperous-looking were placed by a young usher in the front pews, but one old man, wrapped in a shabby cloak, was left standing until all the others were seated and the service had begun. Then the usher beckoned the old gentleman to an empty seat at the back, not even troubling to open the pew door for him. When the service was over the usher was startled at hearing some one exclaim, "Why, there is General Sherman!" and man after man advanced to shake hands with the old soldier in the worn military cloak. Then of course the usher was mortified, but wasn't his behavior just as rude whoever the old man might have been? Only perhaps it took a great man, like the general, not to care for the best seat which many another would have demanded as his right.

Hundreds of years ago, in Palestine, there were men also, who, puffed up with pride and importance, claimed for themselves the best seats in the synagogues and at the feasts. They were the scribes and the Pharisees, and they were the only ones at whom we know the wrath of Jesus blazed forth in words which are like vivid flashes of lightning.—Mary Stewart, in A King Among Men.

Sentence Sermons. The lost opportunities we most regret are opportunities for loving.—Charles Wagner.

Try to be all that you seem to be.—Booker T. Washington.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What led Jesus to give the first parable of our lesson? 2. What was the sin of the rich man? 3. What other mistakes did he make? 4. What harm is there in overeating? 5. What is the harm of drinking a little intoxicating liquor now and then? 6. What is the sin of drunkenness?

LESSON XII—MARCH 22

THE USE AND ABUSE OF GOD'S GIFTS (Temperance Lesson)

GOLDEN TEXT: Be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit. Ephesians 5.18

LESSON Luke 12 DEVOTIONAL READING Matthew 6.19-24

LUKE 12.16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17 and he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits? 18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. 20 But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? 21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

41 And Peter said, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even unto all? 42 And the Lord said, Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall set over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? 43 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. 44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he will set him over all that he hath. 45 But if that servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; 46 the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he expecteth not, and in an hour when he knoweth not, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the unfaithful. 47 And that servant, who knew his lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many "stripes"; 48 but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few "stripes." And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask the more.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Charge to the Disciples, verses 1-12.

II. The Warning against Covetousness, verses 13-21. For the occasion that led to the giving of this parable, see The Historical Background. A certain rich man, so the parable of Jesus begins, whose fields yielded more than his barns would hold, propounded to himself this query, "What shall I do because I have not where to bestow my fruits?"

> "God has provided barns for superfluous corn in mouths that hunger, limbs that shiver, homes where the orphaned and the widowed sit in want. To store in these treasure-houses is the luxury as well as the duty of wealth."

The rich man proceeded to answer his query: "This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater. And I will say to my soul [some one observes that he was talking to his stomach under the impression that he was addressing his soul], Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry." "He does not say to it, 'Now, my soul, let us study art and music and literature.' The finer instincts have gone; his feeling for God, his enthusiasm for humanity. He has so lived that at the end of his years he has lost the capacity to live. He has made a living and unmade a life" (J. H. Jowett).

> "It is a shameful conception of wealth which regards it only as a means to ease and luxurious living. The ease it brings is, or should be, only the reward for the heavy responsibilities it imposes. The man who is rich by reason of the great business interests he has built up is accountable to the community for the honesty and usefulness of his service, to his hundreds or thousands of employees for such a conduct of the business as will assure them of their means of livelihood, to his own conscience for laborious and unremitting attention to the wearisome details of business management. Too often the loss of leisure, health, and happiness is the penalty he pays for the luxuries he enjoys."

"The rich fool made three mistakes: he mistook his body for his soul; he mistook time for eternity; and he mistook himself for God, the Ruler of all destinies" (James Orr). God said unto him, "Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?"

Saladin the Great, who conquered Syria, Arabia, Persia, and Mesopotamia, had wealth untold, yet he held that riches were valueless. He left orders that the shirt, or tunic, which he wore at the time of his death, should be borne on the end of a spear at the head of his army, and that the soldier who thus carried it throughout the camp should often stop and proclaim: "Behold all that remains of the Emperor Saladin!—of all the states he had conquered; of all the provinces he had subdued; of the boundless treasures he had amassed; of the countless wealth he possessed; he retained, in dying, nothing but this shroud!"

There is a book in which a line of our familiar hymn, "Guide me, O thou Great Jehovah," reads, "Lands me safe on Canaan's shore"—a thought which might have been in the mind of this rich man! Thus ends the parable of one who laid up treasure for himself, and was not rich toward God.

"It was tragically true. He had no room. You feel that he is a man cramped, cabined, confined. He died of it. In physics a vacuum is another name for a crushing pressure from without, and nothing within to meet and resist. This man had allowed the pressure of outward things to grow, and there was no inner life of the spirit to resist the pressure. Nature abhors a vacuum. So does God, of this kind, and one night the self-complacent man went where the pressure of the temporal is felt no more. He went to learn in eternity what he had not known in time, that he was a self-made pauper, that life had a thousand meanings which had not dawned upon his intelligence, a thousand melodies, and not one of them had he heard, charged to the full with significances he had never perceived, enriched with wealth he had wholly missed. It is a story of nemesis—the nemesis of the self-centered.

"We may stifle those high and holy thoughts and aspirations which are the soul's true sustenance, and seek to satisfy it with material possessions. We may think thereby to gain the world. It is the world that has gained us" (T. Yates).

III. A Lesson for the Anxious Poor, verses 22-34.

IV. The Parable of Faithful and Unfaithful Servants, verses 35-40. Watch eagerly for the coming of the King, like servants of a lord who, with loins girt for service, and with lamps burning, await his coming in the night time. "In the spiritual sphere the loins girt point to a noble purpose in life, and the burning lamp to the spirit of hope." When the master finds them watching, he in his joy will himself take the place of a servant, make them sit down, and serve them. Blessed is that master who finds them watching in the second or in the third watch—the time when men are most liable to give way to sleep. Then Jesus used a new figure, that of a master of the house on his guard against the coming of a thief at an unexpected time. And the conclusion of the parable is: Be ye also ready: for in an hour that ye think not, the Son of man cometh.

V. The Problem of Stewardship, verses 41-48. Peter, who was ever ready with his questions, wished to know if the parable had been spoken especially for the Twelve. "Who then [if not each of you] is the faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall set over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?" Great shall be his reward. But if that servant shall weary of waiting for his lord's return, and shall begin to maltreat the under-servants, and to spend his days in feasting and drinking himself drunk, the lord will come unexpectedly and shall cut him asunder, or severely scourge him (Revised Version). "The verb translated 'cut asunder' may mean either to lash unmercifully, to cut to pieces in popular parlance, or to separate from the household establishment. To 'appoint his position with the unfaithful' points to degradation from the confidential position of steward to a place among the unfaithful, dismissed, or imprisoned, or set to drudging service" (Expositor's Greek Testament).

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Eugène Burnand

THE MISER

I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thy ease, eat, drink, be merry.—Luke 12. 19.

The servant who knows his master's will but deliberately fails to do it will be more severely dealt with than the one who fails but does not know his lord's will. "The latter is a lower servant in the house to whom the master gave no particular instructions on leaving, therefore without special sense of responsibility during his absence, and liable, like the average servant, to take liberties when the master is away from home." "'He that knew not' will still be punished, for he could have known; but not punished so much as the others, for the other was presumptuous, but this one was slothful; and presumption is a greater sin that sloth" (Enthymius).

Another interpretation is that those who knew not their lord's will refers to the Gentiles. Whatever God does to them will be just, says Jesus: in every case the punishment will be proportioned with exactitude to the offence. Luke was himself a Gentile, and the characteristic of his Gospel is that he records the words of Jesus which were favorable to the Gentiles.

"The more thou knowest, and the better thou understandest, the more strictly shalt thou be judged, unless thy life be also the more holy" (Thomas à Kempis).

The parable concludes with a sentence in which the whole law of stewardship, of personal responsibility, is condensed: And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask the more.

"The benefit we receive must be rendered line for line, cent for cent, deed for deed, to somebody" (Emerson).

VI. The Strife which the Gospel Will Produce, verses 49-53.

VII. Ignorance of the Signs of the Times, verses 54-59.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Bid my brother divide the inheritance with me, verse 13. There is probably no Oriental town to be found that does not have its chronic and long-continued cases of family litigation over questions concerning the division of property by inheritance. The judicial customs of Eastern tribunals are such as to encourage litigation, and leave cases open for repeated appeals. So in every town are to be found those with a real, or with a fancied, grievance, who have been waiting from year to year for some new judge or governor to take up their case and try it over again; and perhaps under the influence of new inducements, legal or illegal, the new man may be persuaded to reverse the former decision, and thus render justice to the long-suffering claimant.

In the absence of such change in the tribunal, the claimant details his grievance wherever he can find a listening ear. Every one who comes into the neighborhood having a reputation as a learned man, or one above the ordinary level of intelligence, is compelled to hear the story, look through the documents, and express some opinion on the merits of the case. This is a common experience of missionaries among the Oriental people at the present day.—Albert L. Long.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

"Beware of hypocrisy," was the main theme of a great address which Jesus was once giving his disciples in the presence of a multitude so large that "they trod one upon another." As he went on to bid them trust in God's care and to confess him before men, one of his hearers, little interested in Jesus' words, because his thoughts were all upon himself and a wrong which he thought had been done him, interrupted Jesus and said, "Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me." "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" Jesus sternly asked, and then said to all his listeners, "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness." And he gave them our first parable to illustrate a covetous man and his fate.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Today we have one of those lessons, fortunately rare, in which the text calls clamantly for topics different from those assigned by the Lesson Committee. The parable of the rich man and his greater barns calls for a discussion of

covetousness, of the stewardship of wealth, and of the fact that this life is not forever, that "our last robe has no pockets"; the themes of the second parable are faithfulness and also stewardship, with the thought-arresting words of the last verse.

However, a temperance lesson once a Quarter comes none too often, and verse forty-five may be taken as a point of departure. When the Sunday School was new and was deemed by some people a dangerous innovation, and when the French Revolution was a big menace to other nations, Thomas Jefferson said that "the Sunday School provides the only legitimate means for avoiding the rock on which the French Republic was wrecked." The Sunday School is today next to the public schools, the best means for avoiding the rock on which Prohibition may be wrecked.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE ENSLAVING POWER OF STRONG DRINK

Beginning the Lesson. Suppose that, as Abraham Lincoln was finishing his Second Inaugural Address and had just reached the lofty paragraph beginning, "With malice toward none," some persistent office-seeker had interrupted him, loudly demanding to be appointed to a position. Or suppose that some one should interrupt an impressive sermon to a large congregation by clamoring for the ushers to show him a better seat. With such situations in mind, we realize the untimeliness of the man who interrupted Jesus to demand his brother be made to share the inheritance with him. It was a discourse of rare beauty and trust, and Jesus had just assured his disciples of the sure presence of God's spirit with them. But it did not take the man's mind from his own grievance. He felt himself defrauded and disinherited. He had so far lost his sense of the relative values and importance of things, his own affairs were so all important, that all he could think of was how he could use Jesus for his own financial gain.

While it was easy to interrupt Jesus, it was impossible for any one to throw him off the track or entangle him. Refusing to pronounce as to the justice of the claim, or even to listen to it, he passed swiftly to point out the deeper evil from which the man was suffering, covetousness. "Keep yourselves from all covetousness," he pleaded, "for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth." He enforced the plea with a story which convincingly portrays the supreme folly into which covetousness brings men, the Parable of the Rich Fool.—Halford E. Luccock, in Studies in the Parables of Jesus.

Self-Communion. As I was meditating upon our familiar parable I chanced upon these words with which Dr. Fosdick introduces a thought-provoking talk upon character:

"One of the family, lost in reverie and asked what he is doing, will probably respond, 'I was only talking to myself.' He tosses it lightly off, but, in fact, few things in life are so important. All the while, save when we are unconscious, an inner conversation is going on. Each of us is not one, but two—'I' —'Me'—and with endless persistence these two confer. No man can be divorced from himself. Indissolubly attached to himself, he has, willy-nilly, to go on living with himself, counseling, debating, quarreling, or peacefully conferring with himself, day after day saying to himself things which make or unmake his life."

How true to life is this little parable which Jesus uttered! When the rich man was alone with himself, how did he talk to himself? Such things he was habitually saying to himself—and they unmade his life.

Possessions and Appetites. It seems an incredible thing that a man should hold a colloquy of this kind with his soul, inviting it to satisfactions so incongruous, and Jesus deliberately made the incongruity as vivid as words can express it. But the incongruity disappears when we reflect that it is an actual thing that men and women can so concentrate endeavor and desire upon possessions and appetites that they are under the impression that these things are inseparable from their deepest and most real selves, and absolutely identified with their well-being. This is the delusion which a practical materialism imposes upon the mind at last.

Man has to grow a soul, and no man can ignore its needs persistently, and then at the end find it there, unstarved, unharmed, unchanged.—T. Yates, in The Strategies of Grace.

Let us Eat, Drink, and Be Merry. It is said that there are upwards of forty thousand millionaires in our country. The majority of these millionaires utilize a fair share of their [illegible] public good, but great numbers have r their own gratification and glorifica- g Post (Samuel G. Blythe) describes

e guests. There is the rub. So must sts. The competition is fierce. It re- ork to keep a big estate even passably d laborious entertainments, squander- alement of people who condescend to might be at other and better places

embarrassment. The costs are pro- results are nil. The usual houseparty versions, and heavy feeding. That's the country over.

ates and their yachts, these men are id amusements as they can find them. ost ornate ships, and they do exactly y drink and dance and play bridge. dance and play bridge. They go on voyages where they drink and dance millionaire goes he is condemned to and gamble. If he doesn't dance, he he eats much more than is good for

stanza:

of us creep
at and sleep,
n why we're born
e the corn,
lesh and fish,
n empty dish;
nes, when we die,
er and to lie,
er can be said
up all his bread,
and gone to bed."

his Own Life and All Its Capacities.
Jesus as having inevitably a double ne hand, and of grace and mercy on ee that the very life of God is intrin- me time the solemn seriousness that y of this choice of the life of love for of love is not made, dwindling life grace of God, therefore, which is to ng than in those of tender solicitude. lisciple of Christ, in its double aspect, nd unfaithful servants, which masses t life and for vigilant watchfulness," perhaps no other single passage in the teaching of Jesus does. This passage in itself gives a kind of compact and comprehensive philosophy of life. In the words of Professor Peabody: "Spiritual insensibility is not an intellectual but a moral defect—the sheer indolence and satiety of a loose and ungirt habit of life." Moral blindness and inability to face the stern crises are the natural result of the ungirt, indolent life. Vigilant watchfulness, therefore, is the price of all attainment while lack of watchfulness, in Christ's thought, is one of the great enemies of life. And, therefore, Jesus masses the motives "against" the ungirt life, on the one hand, and "for" vigilant watchfulness on the other.

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Christ insists that every man is a servant put in trust with his own life and all its capacities—capacities capable of endless growth in power, in knowledge, in character, in fellowship with the living God. Here is solemn, challenging, and royal commission for every man. Christ calls here to intrinsic greatness, and to the vigilant alertness of servants momentarily expecting their lord's return.

The reward for fidelity is still larger trust—ever larger opportunities crowding in on our lives. Not only, then, because of the trusts already given, but also for the sake of the vastly larger trusts in store for us, that are jeopardized by every lack of watchfulness on our part, we are to be faithful. Not only this limited present, but our larger future, too, is all here in jeopardy.

Jesus presses further the solemn warnings which life holds. He faces the perils of neglect and negligence. There is no good or safe time to fall below our best vision. Therefore, Jesus urges, "Be ye also ready." The more important one's work—and fidelity in duty is infinitely important to all—the less possible it is, safely to let down one's watch. We never know what our critical hours are to be—when we are to be weighed in the balances. Every day is a doomsday, not only for the individual goal, but also for the great crises of the Kingdom.

We may not trifle with the inevitable penalty of abuse of trust in any realm. One cannot play false and have the reward of honest fidelity in his fellowship or in his work. His building is false. In some hour of stress it will tumble about his ears. Literally it is true of him, that "his portion is with the unfaithful." The treacherous provoke treachery.

Closely akin to abuse of trust, in Christ's thought, is the application of the principle of "judgment according to light." Where much is given, as to the favored and to leaders, there much shall be required. A greater trust requires not less but greater watchfulness, not less but greater fidelity. If the privileges are great the service must be in like measure. So Jesus urges this inevitable law of the kingdom—judgment according to light. And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom they commit much of him will they ask the more.—Condensed from a Baccalaureate Sermon by Henry Churchill King.

Eat, Drink, and Be Drunken. Limits are essential not only to virtue, but to enjoyment itself. Unlimited indulgence means merely ennui and boredom, and excessive pleasure is a form of pain.

Any man can allow his life to sprawl like a rank and noisome weed; the temperate man is one whose life is trained and pruned into shapeliness and fruitage. Does that mean total abstinence from certain kinds of amusement or indulgence? It certainly does. But—what is vastly more important—it means that in all amusement, recreation, sport, enjoyment, one shall be able to say: "I am the master of my fate, the captain of my soul." It means deliberate self-limitation in the interest of real happiness.

As to exactly what is right and what is wrong, we may not agree. Our fathers and mothers encouraged the lottery and frowned on the theater; they saw little wrong in alcohol and much in the novel. But they had what we most need today—deliberate self-control, mastery of the inner powers, a well-tempered soul.—W. H. P. Faunce, in Facing Life.

The Prohibition Battle. "Well, that job's done; let's go home," said the American people, in effect, when the Eighteenth Amendment had become a part of the Constitution. Two things were in large part responsible for the successful termination of the long fight for prohibition: the disgust that was aroused by the sight of the open saloon and its gangs of sodden loafers, and the teaching of the evils of alcohol in all the public schools. Prohibition closed the saloon; few children now in high school remember the thing at all. They do not know whether they are against it, because they do not know what it was. With the closing of the saloon went the apparent necessity for stressing the evils of alcohol, and one of the stanchest allies of the prohibitionists was lost. In few schools are the children taught that "wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." In other words, deceived by the victory that had been won, the fighters went home.

And the enemy came back—with recruits that one would never in all the

wide world have expected to see under his banner. But there they are, none of them willing to admit that they want the saloon back, but all vociferously claiming that they've got "a right to drink" and that they are going to do it. The New York papers even point proudly to the three hundred and something lawyers who have banded themselves together to protect those who break the law—incidentally agreeing, every one of them, to dishonor the oath they took when they were admitted to the bar. Such is the determination of those who want their drinks. We are convinced that they are in the minority, and that they will lose out in the end; but the fact remains that their side of the story is reaching the multitude today, and the truth about alcohol—even the truth about prohibition—is not. No one dreamed, of course, that an orgy of bootlegging would follow prohibition; just as no one would have suspected that multitudes would make fools of themselves just to prove that they can. But both of these things happened; together they constitute a serious situation. It may mean the fighting of the good old fight all over again; at least it does mean that the young people must again be taught the lesson of temperance. That lesson should never have been interrupted. It must be renewed with vigor now. The wets are saying that in 1932 there will be four million new voters who have heard only their side of the story. If that proves to be true, temperance will hardly deserve to succeed.—William Frederick Bigelow, in Good Housekeeping.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. The lure of money-making. "They's notin' patheticher'n jes' a-bein' rich!" Ownership versus stewardship.

2. The need for education on all phases of the temperance question. The effect of the relaxing of educational work. The folly of relying too much upon legislation and too little upon moral conviction.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE SIN OF DRUNKENNESS AND GLUTTONY

Beginning the Lesson. Bruce Barton, in The Man of Galilee, thus describes the possessions of the rich man in our first parable:

"His riches consisted of wheat and barley, probably, secured in granaries of sun-dried brick; the bricks plastered smoothly with earth and lime to close all the cracks against robbers, mice, and insects. Of oil, doubtless, pressed from the olives in his groves, and sealed into large earthen jars. Of wine, also in jars, but in smaller ones with narrower necks. Of wool and linens, tied up in bundles and piled high above the bins where the grain was stored. Of all such articles of food and clothing as could be kept with reasonable safety against theft or depreciation. All these he tried to put safely away, in a great storehouse entered from the courtyard of his house. Its door was immediately opposite his door; his windows looked out on its strong blank walls; his goods were never out of sight.

"Nor were these bulky goods his only wealth. He had sold the increase of his flocks and invested in things easily concealed. He had several crocks of gold and silver. He had a little jar of jewels. When his servants were inside with him, he dared not uncover them, but now—he entered alone and barred the door, and fastened up the lamp carefully where it could not set fire to the wool, and opened one of his secret stores. The glittering things trickled through his fingers and gladdened his eyes. They were security; they were stored up happiness. Some day he would begin to draw upon them, to convert them into pleasure. But not yet. He knew of things that he still desired in the way of possessions. And he saw that he had practically reached the limit of his storage. What could he do?"

Continue with Explanations and Comments.

The Use and Abuse of God's Gifts. The man who, when his barns were full, could think of nothing better to do than to build bigger barns to store further harvests, and then to sit down at ease, spending his time in eating, drinking and merry-making, was not using God's gifts aright. He was merely hoarding his wealth, and using it solely for himself in enervating luxury. The man who ate till he was satiated and drank till he was drunk was abusing God's gifts

of food and fruit, and making of himself a brute who enjoyed beating the manservants and the maidservants.

Gluttony and drunkenness make beasts of men.

Be Temperate in All Things. Man may eat too much bread, he may drink too much water, he may surfeit himself with honey; he may go too far even in legitimate directions; and having gone thus far, he has gained no advantage, but has actually lost the advantage with which he started. Moderation is enjoyment; temperance is the true delight; self-control is real power. Nothing is done by violence, over-reaching, exaggeration; everything that is worth accomplishing can be accomplished by moderation of desire and by moderation of action.—Joseph Parker.

The Gluttonous Python. The natives of India have an ingenious way of catching pythons. When they see a long trail made by the python's body near the bank of a river, and find a heap of ruins near by, they know this is the abode of the huge serpent. Then they make a hole in the ruined wall just large enough for the python to crawl through. And on each side of the hole they tie a pig to a stake. As the python comes home for the night it hears the pigs squealing, and quickly seizes one of them. Down goes the pig into the big snake's throat, sucked in slowly by sheer muscular action. In about half an hour the pig has passed completely down the long neck and in another half hour it is down a couple of yards farther into the python's stomach.

Most animals would go right to sleep after such a gorge, but the greedy python hears the pig on the other side and can't forego that meal also. It puts its head through the hole and swallows the second pig. Then the wily natives have the snake caught! Pig number one prevents it from advancing; and pig number two prevents it from retreating. The natives lasso the python round the neck, break down the wall, pass a coil of rope between the two lumps of pig before they can amalgamate, and then they bear away the python to captivity, whence it is sent to some "Zoo." Perhaps you have seen the glutton who has been caught in this way.

Drunkenness is Degrading. "A lawyer had fallen into open disgrace through convivial habits and wanted to reform, but failed to succeed. At last a friend told him the plain truth. He said: 'Now, James, the reason you do not reform is simply because you do not want to reform. You do not dislike the habit of drinking, and you are not ashamed of being drunk. You are afraid of exposure, and you do not like the consequences of your evil deeds. You will never reform until you see that drunkenness is in itself shameful and degrading, no matter whether other people know it or not. So long as you are merely trying to get away from the consequences of your indulgence, you will be tempted to drink every time you think you can do it without paying the penalty.' Although the man was stunned by the frankness of his friend, he felt the force of the assault upon his conscience, and had left in him enough manhood to admit the charge and apply the remedy."

A Picture of Drunkards. In the gallery of the Luxembourg at Paris hangs Couture's great picture, The Decadence of the Romans,—a picture of a luxurious hall where the frenzied orgy is at its height, a carnival of drunkenness and wantonness. A drunken youth, with a wreath in his hair, sits upon a pedestal; while a reeling boy proffers a goblet to the marble mouth of a statue. The old Roman dignity is gone from the brutalized faces of the revelers, which contrast sadly with the noble features of the statues of the old Roman worthies ranged round the hall, and with the sad faces of a group of thoughtful-looking men who are quitting the scene. And what is perhaps as significant as any other feature is, that the faces of this picture present a surprising likeness to the faces which one sees every day in Paris, and that the models for this wreck of human nature are furnished by the painter's own city. It is the story of the inevitable end of fast life and of fast society.—Marvin R. Vincent.

Sentence Sermons. It is better to make a life than a living.—William E. Russell.

Drink is the mother of want and the nurse of crime.—Lord Brougham.

Alcoholic liquor stupefies and besots.—Bismarck.

LESSON XIII—MARCH 29

REVIEW: JESUS THE WORLD'S SAVIOR

PREPARATION AND POPULARITY

GOLDEN TEXT: Jesus of Nazareth . . . who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. Acts 10.38

DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 35.5-10

QUESTIONS UPON THE QUARTER'S LESSON

For Young People and Adults.

1. How was the world prepared for the coming of Jesus?
2. What traits in the character and preaching of John the Baptist suggest the Old Testament rather than the New?
3. In what respects was John the Baptist a great man? What was his message?
4. What is the lesson for parents in the account of Jesus' first visit to Jerusalem?
5. At the beginning of his ministry, what conflicting ideals did Jesus settle, and how?
6. What are some of the standards set by Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount?
7. Can one live by the Golden Rule?
8. How did Jesus express the evil of punctiliousness without principle?
9. What is meant by "the stewardship of life," and how did Jesus teach the lesson?
10. What questions has Jesus answered, and how do his answers show his wisdom?

For Intermediates and Seniors.

1. Where is Palestine?
2. Locate the place where Jesus was born, the place where he lived until his baptism, and the place which was his headquarters during his public ministry.
3. How did the Boy Jesus treat his parents?
4. What were Jesus' first recorded words, and what was the occasion for them?
5. What was the message of John the Baptist?
6. In what way was Jesus tempted in the Wilderness?
7. What is the Golden Rule?
8. What is a parable?
9. By what parable did Jesus teach the lesson of taking heed how one hears?
10. How did he teach the lesson that we must share with those in need?

QUESTIONS ON THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

1. What is the subject and scope of our first two quarters' lessons? 2. What do we know about Luke the writer? 3. What accounts would you expect Luke to give because he was a physician? 4. For whom did he write? 5. What was Luke's special aim in writing his Gospel? 6. What sources of information had he? 7. Which two Gospels have stories of the birth of Christ? Which story is told by Luke? 8. What section of this Gospel is not given by another Evangelist? 9. What parables are recorded only by Luke? 10. What are the special characteristics of this Gospel?

A REVIEW OF IMPORTANT WORDS

Complete each of the following, and tell the occasion for its utterance:—

1. And the child grew, and . . .
2. Bring forth therefore fruits . . .
3. Thou foolish one, this night . . .
4. It is written, man shall . . .

5. If ye love them that love . . .
6. The harvest indeed is . . .
7. Love your enemies, do . . .
8. These ought ye to have . . .
9. And as ye would that men . . .
10. Thou art anxious and . . .
11. Every tree therefore that bringeth . . .
12. Give, and it shall be given . . .
13. Why beholdest thou the mote . . .
14. For with what measure ye . . .
15. Thou shalt worship the . . .
16. All things have been delivered . . .
17. Thou shalt not make . . .
18. Be ye merciful . . .
19. Soul, thou hast much . . .
20. He that hath two coats . . .

WRITTEN WORK

For Young People and Adults.

1. The Gospel According to Luke.
2. An Appraisement of John the Baptist.
3. A Comparison of John the Baptist and Elijah.
4. Jesus the Great Teacher.
5. Standards of Living Taught by Jesus.
6. The Parables of the Quarter.

For Intermediates and Seniors.

1. The Story of John the Baptist's Mission.
2. The Story of the Lost Boy.
3. One of the Parables.
4. A Dinner Party with its Strange Customs.
5. A Missionary Story.
6. In a Home in Bethany.

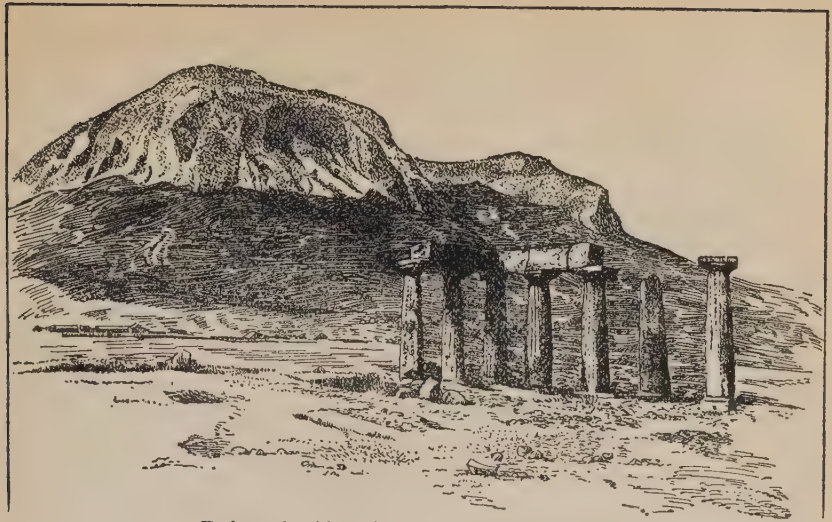
QUESTIONS TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

For Young People and Adults. For the Lesson about Humility. 1. What is the force of the word "that" in verse 10? 2. How are the words of verse 11 true today? 3. Is there anything in modern society that corresponds to the Jews' choice of the first seats at a feast? 4. What does Paul say in Phil. 2.3 about lowliness of mind? 5. Is humility opposed to all ambition? 6. What is the difference between humility and humiliation? 7. Do we as a class follow Jesus' counsel to hosts? 8. How often do you confer a pleasure or a benefit upon another who cannot return it?

For Young People and Adults. For the Easter Lesson. 1. Where in the Bible is the great chapter upon immortality? 2. What part of this chapter is usually read at a burial service? Why? 3. How many of the appearances of the Risen Christ can you recall? 4. What is the meaning of "wherein also ye stand," verse 1? 5. What is the meaning of the last phrase of verse 2? 6. What is the force of the "therefore," verse 58? 7. What to you are the best evidences of the resurrection of Jesus?

For Intermediates and Seniors. For the Lesson about Humility. 1. Do you ever scramble for a seat in any train, trolley, or other public place? 2. How did John the Baptist show himself willing to take a lowly place? 3. How was Jesus tempted to prefer himself before others? 4. What did Jesus say about his own humility? (Mt. 11.29.) 5. What object lesson in humility did Jesus give his disciples? (Jn. 13.4-17.) 6. Did Jesus mean by his words in verse 12 that one should never invite his friends to a feast? What did he mean? 7. For what sort of people do those mentioned in verse 13 stand? 8. How have our lessons shown Jesus as the friend of the poor and maimed?

For Intermediates and Seniors. For the Easter Lesson. 1. Who wrote First Corinthians? 2. When was Paul at Corinth? 3. What is Chapter XIII about? 4. What is Chapter XV about? 5. Read Acts 9.27, 28. 6. Who was Cephas? 7. What is the meaning of "some are fallen asleep," verse 6? 8. What does our title, the Gospel of the Resurrection, mean?



Ruins of a Temple on the Site of Corinth

SECOND QUARTER

JESUS THE WORLD'S SAVIOR: STUDIES IN LUKE

(Second Half of a Six-Months' Course)

LESSON I—APRIL 5

(For the Easter Lesson, see page 133)

JESUS TEACHES HUMILITY

GOLDEN TEXT: Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Luke 14.11

LESSON Luke 13.1 to 14.35; 18.15-17

DEVOTIONAL READING Philippians 2.1-11

LUKE 14.7 And he spake a parable unto those that were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief seats; saying unto them, 8 When thou art bidden of any man to a marriage feast, sit not down in the chief seat; lest haply a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him, 9 and he that bade thee and him shall come and say to thee, Give this man place; and then thou shalt begin with shame to take the lowest place. 10 But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place; that when he that hath bidden thee cometh, he may say to thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have glory in the presence of all that sit at meat with thee. 11 For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

12 And he said to him also that had bidden him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor rich neighbors; lest haply they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. 13 But when thou makest a feast, bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: 14 and thou shalt be blessed; because they have not "wherewith" to recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just.

18.15 And they were bringing unto him also their babes, that he should touch them: but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. 16 But Jesus called them unto him, saying, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God. 17 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Call to Repentance, 13.1-5.

II. The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree, 13.6-9.

III. A Cure on the Sabbath, 13.10-17.

IV. Parables of the Mustard Seed and of the Leaven, 13.18-21.

V. The Narrow Door, 13.22-30.

VI. Lament over Jerusalem, 13.31-35.

VII. Another Cure on the Sabbath, 14.1-6.

VIII. A Lesson on Humility, 14.7-11. At some gathering, possibly on the occasion of his curing the man with the dropsy at the home of a ruler of the Pharisees, verses 1-6, Jesus observed how the guests sought the chief seats. The chief seat was at the host's left hand. On a couch, the one in the middle was held most in honor, the one on the left was second, and the one on the right, last. See Light from Oriental Life. To rebuke them he told what Luke calls a parable although, strictly speaking, the words that follow are not in the form of a parable. Professor A. S. Peake suggests that the two counsels that follow originally may have been given in the form of parables and that Luke recast them into direct discourse.

"When thou art bidden to a marriage feast," Jesus began—a more formal occasion than the one where they found themselves—"sit not down in the chief seat. It may be that thy host has also invited a more honorable man than thou, and he will come and say to thee, Give this man place. Then shalt thou find all the other seats of honor taken, and must with shame take the lowest place of all." Then Jesus counseled them to take the lowest seat in the first place, and then their host might say to them, "Friend, go up higher." "We are not to conclude that Jesus advocated false humility as the road to advancement. He spoke of consequences rather than purpose" (A. S. Peake).

> Do we work for rewards? If we know that by taking the lowest seats we shall be called to the highest, can we be truly humble? Why are motives confused, intentions troubled, by the knowledge that right attitude will have its sure reward? Can there be such absolute purity of motive as to make reward innocent? Certain words spoken by the Canon of St. Paul's gives us our answer: "According to the law of grace, all the emptying of self is an admittance of God into action within the self. And this entering of God must always show itself abroad in its power to lift, to change, to exalt. Humility, then, if it be genuine, is bound to have three consequences, is bound to result in glorious achievement, in growing excellence, in surprising rewards. And the humility that wins the answer in reward does not cease to be what it was; rather it finds in the reward a reason for a yet deeper humility. It is humbled in the dust by recognizing what God does in and through it."

The conclusion of Jesus' counsel is a saying spoken by him on several occasions (Lk. 18.14; Mt. 23.12): For he that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. "This shows that Jesus had not been uttering maxims of earthly prudence, but had been teaching figuratively the duty of humility as essential to the Kingdom" (A. E. Garvie).

> "Make it thy care to follow Christ in his humility; he will make it his care to bring thee to his glory" (Andrew Murray). There is "a stoop of the soul which in bending up raises it, too," as Browning so beautifully expresses the thought.

IX. A Lesson on True Hospitality, 14.12-14. The preceding lesson had been for guests; now Jesus turned to his host and gave him food for thought regarding the conferring of favors without expectation of a return. "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, do not make a practice of inviting [for such the tense of the Greek verb shows is the meaning here] thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor rich neighbors—those who are in a position to offer thee reciprocal hospitality. Lest haply they also bid thee again, and a

recompense be made thee." "'Lest haply'—what delicate and delicious irony! He speaks of the possible return of favors as if it were peril they were incurring, instead of being the solid result at which they were directly aiming in their studied cultivation of their 'rich neighbors.' The Master did not disdain to use irony at times to point his truth and make it sting" (C. R. Brown). "Sometimes invite those to a feast who lack the wherewithal to give thee an invitation in return—the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind." Genuine hospitality seeks no recompense. Let the recompense in the future suffice, "for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just."

The trouble with our eyes often is that the warmth that is in them we keep for the little knot of congenials that likewise look back warmly upon us. It is not right that two or three or a dozen people whose lives are warm and bright should spend a large part of their time beaming upon one another. Jesus undoubtedly did a little of that in the home of Martha and Mary and Lazarus; he beamed on them and they beamed on him, and, on very rare occasions, as it would seem, did what some of us do all the time —had a beautiful time enjoying people who were thoroughly congenial to him. But that was not the way he lived. Some of us live that way all the time. Some of us never beam except on those who beam on us. Christ's conception of Christianity was of Christians who were strong and helped the weak, not those who were strong and needed no help; of those who gathered around their fireplaces those that were cold, not those who had comfortable fireplaces of their own. "If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?"

X. The Parable of the Slighted Invitation, 14.15-24.

XI. The Exactingness of Discipleship, 14.25-35.

XII. A Lesson on the Child Spirit, 18.15-17. On one occasion parents brought their children to Jesus as they were wont to bring them to the rabbis in the synagogues, to have him bless them, but the disciples rebuked them. They brought "also their babes," Luke says; evidently the disciples thought their Master already too thronged by men and women without the addition of the babes.

"There is no doubt that the disciples meant well. It is possible to mean well and do ill" (G. Campbell Morgan).

Jesus then rebuked the disciples, saying, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for to such belongeth the Kingdom of God." The Kingdom of God, the reign of God over man, belongs to the childlike believers, those who possess the receptivity and trustfulness of children.

"Verily I say unto you," Jesus added, "Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein." The double Greek negative, of which "ye shall in no wise enter therein," is a translation, is very emphatic: it is not a question of their being great in the kingdom, but of their entering at all.

"Let us examine ourselves and see how much or how little of this child-spirit we bring to the Lord. What application of mind have we given to him? What powers of exploration? What ardors of tiptoe wonder? What readiness of will and obedience? What whole-hearted devotion have we registered at the gate of the Kingdom?" (J. H. Jowett).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

They chose out the chief seats, verse 7. In Eastern entertainments, nothing of consequence ever takes place before the dinner has been despatched; music and dancing, exhibitions and amusements of all kinds, come after the cravings of appetite have been satisfied, and all are in a mood to be pleased by anything they may see or hear. As the guests assemble, they take their places on the divan, lining three sides of the apartment, and not a few of them plainly seek the uppermost seats at the feast, which are at the corners of the divan, for they will there be served first, and with the choicest morsels. But Orientals are very particular about rank, and most men dare not venture beyond certain limits.—Van Lennep.

When thou makest a feast, bid the poor, verse 13. The natural principle of human hospitality is social intercourse between equals. Yet there were many exquisite axioms in Jewish ethics which forbade this spirit of exclusiveness. The men to whom Jesus spoke might have remembered their own legend that Job lived in a house that was built square with a door at each side, always open, that the traveler coming from whatever quarter might find welcome. One of the counsels of Jewish wisdom was, "Let the house be open toward the street, and let the poor be the sons of thy house."—William J. Dawson.

It is common in the East for a rich man to give a feast to the poor. Does he wish to gain some temporal or spiritual blessing? He orders a head-servant to prepare a feast for one or two hundred guests. Messengers are then despatched into the streets and lanes to inform the indigent, that on such a day rice and curry will be given to all who are there at the appointed time. Long before the hour the visitors may be seen bending their steps toward the house of the Rasa (king). When the food is ready, the guests sit in rows on the grass, and the servants hand out the portions.—Roberts' Oriental Illustrations.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The interval between the final departure from Galilee and the public entry into Jerusalem was given to three different tasks; the renewed proclamation of the coming of the Kingdom; further efforts to win acceptance in Jerusalem, if, perchance, she might learn to know the things that belong to her peace; and continued training of the disciples, especially needed because of the ill-considered enthusiasm with which they were inclined to view the probable issue of the journey to Jerusalem. The continuation of the new popular enthusiasm and the fresh proofs of the hopelessness of winning Jerusalem made more important the third task—the founding of the faith of the disciples on the rock of personal certainty, from which the rising floods of hatred and seeming ruin for the Master's cause could not sweep it.—Rush Rhees.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Jesus was ever quietly observing the people among whom he labored, and often, as here, using the opportunity afforded for teaching some needed lesson. It is no accident that he has set you the example of teaching manners.

It is Tennyson who sings

> Manners are not idle, but the fruit
> Of noble nature and of loyal mind.

Why not say to yourself today: "On every occasion of meeting my class I will watch for opportunities for the teaching of Christian manners, and I will use them as Jesus used them, by giving a short, inductive lesson, beginning with particulars, proceeding to a principle, and applying the principle to present conditions"? Before long you will begin to receive the teacher's great reward—which he has no right to expect, but when it comes he has a right to enjoy—testimony that the fruits of your teaching are visible.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

SPIRITUAL DEMOCRACY

Beginning the Lesson. To give a guest in Turkey a seat near the entrance door would be regarded as a gross incivility. A missionary writes that he has seen the entire furniture of a room rearranged in order that a distinguished guest might be brought as far into the interior as possible.

A formal dinner was once given in Kyoto in honor of Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown, and as he entered the dining-room with his wife they were requested to sit in the places of honor. They at once took the places designated as they would have done in an American home at the bidding of the hostess. But the next day a resident missionary informed them that they had committed an unpardonable breach of etiquette. They should have gone to the lower end of the dining-room and have seated themselves there, and then, very reluctantly, have allowed themselves to be persuaded to leave and go to the higher seats intended for them. "When we learned, to our humiliation, how such

things are done in Japanese society," Dr. Brown comments, "we felt that we did not need any commentaries on the passage in Luke to enable us to fully comprehend its meaning."

What is the passage, and what led Jesus to give this rebuke? Are his words in the eleventh verse literally true? What did Jesus mean by them? "What a word for those anxious social aspirants who are feverishly eating their hearts out in their scramble for preferment at the feasts of the Four Hundred!" to quote Dr. Brown again. "They would consult their own interest as well as improve the quality of their action by giving sober heed to this principle uttered by One who was termed by Lord Chesterfield, 'the only perfect gentleman in the history of the world.' The 'climbers' in society are habitually abased in the eyes of those whose social standing is secure, while those who bend to unselfish service from a kindly interest in their fellows are steadily exalted."

Chief Seats in Early New England Churches. In Colonial times it was customary to "seat the meeting-house," or "dignify the seats," as it was called, by a committee appointed for the purpose. This committee decided how many seats should be considered of the first dignity, and when there were not seats enough for those who had equal claims an extra seat was solemnly voted of equal dignity, and the fact was announced from the pulpit on Sunday. In the earliest days all were equally poor, and the seats were allotted solely on the grounds of age, the dignified seats belonging to the oldest. Later the possession of property had to be taken into account, and lists were made of those whose possessions entitled them to consideration. At Southington, as Herman Temlow tells us in his Sketches, it was voted in 1799 that fifteen pounds were equal to one year of age in rank. A man of thirty, for example, who was rated on the list at three hundred pounds, could sit among men of fifty who were not so rich as he. The decisions of the committee received much criticism, and there is a vote on record at Southington that the committee who last seated the meeting-house be instructed to reconsider their seating, and "if upon a full investigation they find that they have seated some more Higher than their age and the List carried them, and others Lower, to make alterations as appear Just and Right." Has any of that New England spirit lingered to this day in our churches?

Dr. Cleland B. McAfee, writing in The Westminster Adult Bible Class, refers to the fact that in the original Chautauqua only two chairs were placed on the large platform when public addresses were given, one for the speaker and one for the presiding officer. This arose from Bishop Vincent's trouble with brethren who insisted on sitting on the platform as a suitable recognition of their dignity. Although he publicly announced that he would invite to the platform those whom he wished to have there, certain men regularly came up to face the audience. So he had the platform constructed so that there was no way of reaching it directly from the audience room, and directed the janitor to place only two chairs upon it.

Spiritual Democracy. About even our slum work and our city mission work there is often too much of the "de haut en bas" air. It is a pretty thing that the daughter of a multi-millionaire should visit the day nursery and trot the babies of the poor upon her knee, but it means more when she invites the tired sewing girl or the governess to be her guest for a few days at some pleasure resort. It is in society that the real character comes out. The true child of God is seeking for the "wall flowers" that they may be prettily displayed. The true disciple of the Son of God knows that the country boy newly come to the city needs a little social attention to keep his feet from straying. The pleasant "good morning" to the kitchen maid does her more good than her breakfast. "Generous but exclusive" describes a spirit but half converted; friendly toward the friendless, attentive toward the neglected, and hospitable toward those whom "society" snubs, are real characteristics of a true follower of the Lord Jesus.—The Interior.

How the Minister's Question was Answered. The old minister closed the book and looked around the village church. "You are told," he said, "when you make a feast, to call to it not your rich neighbors but the poor, the maimed

and the blind. Now none of you is going to set out a fine dinner or supper this week. Some of us never in our lives gave a great entertainment. Yet the order is to us. I want each one of you, when you go home, to consider what God has given to you besides food with which to make a feast, and who are the poor folk whom you should bid to it."

People glanced, smiling, at each other, for the good man was full of queer suggestions. But the idea remained in the minds of some of his hearers, making their Sunday afternoon uncomfortable.

It bothered Phil Dorrance as he sat alone in his room. He usually sat alone, except when at his meals. Phil was the blacksmith's son, whom his father, by dint of years of hard work and saving, had sent to college. He was grateful to his father, but he felt that his education had made a great gulf between him and the old man. His companions were his classmates. He had meant to spend this afternoon with some of them, discussing a paper he had written on the history of his native State. Instead, he took it downstairs to the kitchen, where his father and mother in their Sunday clothes sat nodding over the fire. How bare and empty their lives were—work and sleep!

"I want to read you something I have written," he said cheerfully.

They drew up their chairs, their eyes sparkling with pride and delight, and listened with a keen, shrewd intelligence that surprised him. They were able, too, to correct some mistakes that he had made, and to give him some facts new to him.

"I haven't had as pleasant a day for years, Phil," said the old man, when the paper was finished. His old mother said nothing, but kissed him, her eyes full of tears.

Squire Paton was known as the best story teller in the country. With strangers he was courteous, gay, and always ready with a joke. At home he was often moody and silent. That afternoon he told his wife some of his best stories, leaving her surprised and laughing, and amazed his stableman by speaking to him cheerfully and kindly.

"It's hardly fair," said the squire to himself, "to give all your good things to strangers and leave the poor in your own household unfed."

And so the minister's question was answered.—The Youth's Companion.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. There is no dishonor in the humble lot—unless one is shirking the responsibilities of one more exalted. The wise man will take the lowest place; but only the shirker will refuse to go up higher.—Donald Hankey.

2. Degrading hospitality to a business transaction.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why do we call this the Parable of the Prodigal Son: is the word prodigal used in the story? By what other names might it be called? 2. How could the prodigal be called dead and lost? 3. What is the attitude in your community toward offenders? 4. What is being done for men and women who come out of penal institutions? 5. What preventive evangelism is your church carrying on? 6. Did the elder brother in the parable have a square deal or not? 8. Did the fact that he had never failed in his filial duty entitle him to a reward?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

GIVING OTHERS THE PREFERENCE

Beginning the Lesson. A riot broke out at Ellis Island among the immigrants who landed there soon after the close of the Great War. Fists and knives were freely used, and many were so severely hurt that they were hurried to the hospital for surgical treatment. You could never guess what occasioned the trouble. It all arose from a little sugar bowl filled with sugar in the room where they entered for lunch. It had been years since those hundreds of people had tasted sugar. A man spied the bowl, grabbed it, and put its contents in his pocket. Those near by were enraged and attacked him, and the place soon became a bedlam of fighting men and women.

There have always been people whose philosophy of life has been that of this man's—"Me first." There were such people in the time of Jesus. Jesus noted this, and more than once gave a much-needed lesson on the sin of

selfishness, the evil of greed and graspingness, the wrong sense of one's own importance. Such a lesson we study today.

Jesus watched the unseemly strife for the best seats at a feast and rebuked it by two pictures: What was the first? What was the second?

A Gracious Lesson. Many years ago an American was traveling in Norway, and was very angry, because, although he had paid for a first-class berth, he was put into a crowded second-class compartment and an upper berth was given to him. The conductor was sorry, but could do nothing for him. One of the other passengers then offered to exchange his lower berth with him, and the offer was quickly accepted. The next morning, after a pleasant conversation, the obliging passenger said, as he was about to leave the train, "Good-by. I hope that sometime you think of Prince Bernadotte." When the others told the American that it was in truth Prince Bernadotte, the second son of the king of Sweden, the American felt, as he expressed it, "very small."

I Am Number Three. A boy of seventeen was starting for college. As his mother kissed him good-by, she put her hands on his shoulders, looked in his eyes and said, "Now, my boy, remember that you are number three." He smiled back at her and said, "Yes, mother, I will remember."

When he got to college he printed on a square piece of pasteboard in black letters, "I am No. 3," and tacked it up in his bedroom so that it would be the first thing he saw when he woke up. When his roommate came in and caught sight of it, he said, "Well, Jack, what in the world does that mean? Why don't you say, 'I am No. 1?'" Then he brought in the other boys and showed it to them. "Look," he said, "Jack's chosen his place; we have first-rate men, and second-rate men; he's going to be a third-rate fellow!" But Jack only smiled.

One evening, in the course of a quiet talk with his roommate, it all came out, and what it meant was this: Too many people in the world say, "I will look out for Number One," meaning "I am Number One and am going to look out for myself first." But that is not the New Testament order. Who is Number One? "That in all things he might have the first place." Jesus Christ is Number One. Who is Number Two? "In lowliness of mind let each count the other better than himself." The other fellow is Number Two. And "I am Number Three." The Pharisee in the temple praying, the rich man forgetful of Lazarus, both said, "I am Number One." But he who reads the third chapter of Philippians, and catches the spirit of the Master will take as his motto, "I am Number Three."—The Welcome.

Guests of Honor. Many years ago Dr. Charles M. Sheldon had a long story in The Youth's Companion which illustrates the lesson Jesus gave his host about true hospitality. At family prayers Andrew McPherson, manager of the Union Coal Mines, read our selection from the fourteenth chapter of Luke, and in his prayer said: "O Lord, make us to feel summat exercised o'er the needs of others. Grant that we may ken the needs and woes o' the mitherless bairns an' hameless bodies; the feckless creatures that ha' ne'er been invited out to dine wi' ony body except their ain sells; an' make us apprehensive o' all the gracious hospitalities thou hast visited upon us at the beneficent hands o' our mony friends, mony of whom ha' ne'er missed what we took frae them, because they had mair than they needed."

As he was leaving for the mines, he said to his wife: "Of course I don't want to insist, for it's your party and Mildred's more than it is mine, but I do wish you would write to him. For auld lang syne, you know. Jim's had hard luck what with all the sickness and the fire. He and Maggie would appreciate it. And besides, he can't invite us to anything, now that he's lost his home." And his wife could but answer, "I'll invite him and Maggie."

"Mother," exclaimed Mildred after her father had gone, "I wish father wouldn't ask you to invite the Blaisdells for Christmas. It will spoil the whole dinner. They won't fit in with any one else. Mother, send them the list, and tell them these are our guests of honor. Maybe they will have sense enough not to come."

Mrs. McPherson went to her writing-desk and drew out a slip of paper.

Mildred looked over her mother's shoulder and read the names of the guests.

"Doctor and Mrs. Clark Langham—they invited us to Red Cliff three times, and we have never had them here to dinner yet. Mr. and Mrs. Cunningham; Judge Henry and his daughter—I haven't seen Louise since we left Bryn Mawr last summer. But they were very kind to me out at Manitou: we owe them something. Mrs. Powell Richardson and her two sons—they are very influential people with the Company. Colonel and Mrs. Hannibal Swain and daughter. We must have them, mother. They entertained me so delightfully at Palm Beach."

"And—Jim Blaisdell and Maggie," said Mrs. McPherson.

"Mother, you know they will spoil everything. They—they—can't talk grammatically, and they are not our kind at all. I can't see why they should be asked."

Mrs. McPherson sat silent, but thought of the time when Jim Blaisdell and Andrew McPherson had risked their lives to rescue two hundred miners shut down in a pocket and cut off by a mountain of débris.

Christmas Eve came, and all preparations had been made for the dinner the next day. Suddenly a terrific tempest dashed over the mountains. "It's an awful storm," said Andrew. "Pray God for any poor creatures out in it." A great limb from the elm before the house was thrown against the window and, shattering the glass, flung the fragments across the room. A thundering crash was heard and down came the big chimney, tearing a hole through the roof. After a night of great excitement the morning dawned dark and somber. A heavy object fell against the front door. The moment Andrew turned the latch, the door burst in, forced by the fury of the wind and by a man who lurched forward, stumbled, and then fell headlong.

"Jim! Jim Blaisdell!"

"He's badly frozen!" exclaimed Mrs. McPherson.

"My gang is out here somewhere. I struck the house by accident. I must go out and find them."

"I'll go out and find them!" cried Andrew. And they both went—it looked as if to their death. But they found the miners huddled together not far away, their faces masses of ice, their feet and hands crippled through frostbite. Among the eleven men there were a Swede, several Italians, a Greek, a Russian Jew, a Bulgarian, a Finn, and a Negro.

After first-aid had been given them all, Mrs. McPherson said to her husband, "These are our guests of honor." "Yes," said Andrew, laughing a little, "Jim's the only one with a written invitation. But it would be too bad to let that eighteen-pound turkey be postponed till the rest could get here."

By two o'clock there sat around the McPherson table the most astonishing circle of guests that they had ever entertained. Andrew looked at the faces with mingled emotions. A great compassion for these men suddenly surged into his heart. He had been seeing these hard toilers all his life, but he had never actually loved them before.

Sentence Sermons. He is truly great that is little in himself and that maketh no account of any height of honors.—Thomas à Kempis.

Rank is only valued by the wise when it offers opportunity for great usefulness.—Donald Hankey.

Selfishness is forgetting others in our over-remembering of self.—William Gorge Jordan.

I call the soul, the best qualities, the real merit of a man, the numerator, and the opinion he has of himself, the denominator; the larger the denominator, we know, the smaller the importance of the numerator.—Tolstoi.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. In what book and what chapter is the Parable of the Prodigal Son given? 2. Where was Jesus when he told this parable? 3. What does the word "prodigal" mean? 4. What does "would fain" mean? 5. What kind of husks are meant? 6. What does "when he came to himself" mean? 7. After he was restored to his place in his home, was the prodigal any the worse for having been a prodigal? 8. Tell the Parable of the Elder Brother, as it may be called, verses 25-32. 9. Was the father partial, or did he deal fairly with the elder son? 10. What do you think of the older brother?

LESSON I—APRIL 5

EASTER LESSON: THE RESURRECTION

GOLDEN TEXT: Now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep. 1 Corinthians 15.20

LESSON 1 Corinthians 15.1-8, 50-58

1 CORINTHIANS 15.1 Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, 2 by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain. 3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures; 5 and that he appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; 6 then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep; 7 then he appeared to James; then to all the apostles; 8 and last of all, as to the "child" untimely born, he appeared to me also.

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law: 57 but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Resurrection of Christ the most Vital of All the Doctrines of the Christian Faith, verses 1-4. Paul reminds his readers, the Corinthians, of his teaching during his work among them, of the gospel, the good news, which they heard from him, on which their faith was grounded, by which they were saved, that is, "in the way of salvation, by faith in the crucified and risen Savior," if they held fast to the word as he had declared it unto them, and had not believed in vain, "without consideration, and so without stability." "Unless, indeed, your faith was all haphazard," is Moffatt's translation. Paul's sentences are usually very involved: the next four verses form one sentence. First of all, as the most important of all the good tidings which I declared unto you, he writes, I told you that which I also had learned (probably from Peter and James, on his visit to Jerusalem recorded in Acts 9.27, 28) that Christ died to atone for our sins, in fulfilment of the Scriptures; that he was buried and was raised on the third day.

> "O vanquished grave of Jesus whose chill could work no change upon his heart!
> O deep, deep grave of Jesus whose depths can hide a whole world's sin!
> O glorious grave of Jesus through whose gloom lies the pathway to Immortal Life!" (Ralph Connor).

II. The Evidence for the Resurrection, verses 5-8. Here follows the oldest account of the appearances of the Risen Christ. He appeared to Peter; then to the Twelve (Paul keeps the symbolical number, though Judas was dead and Thomas was not present at the first appearance); then to more than five hundred at once (probably on the mountain in Galilee, Mt. 28.16, 17), the greater number of whom are still alive—and you can have their direct testimony, if you wish, is the inference—but some are fallen asleep (twenty-five years, at least, had passed since the resurrection of Christ); then he appeared to James (the brother of Jesus, Acts 15.13; Gal. 1.19); then last of all, as to a child untimely born, he appeared to Paul also (Acts 9).

"In all these appearances there was a strange blend of remoteness and in-

timacy, of depth and simplicity. Tenderness and reproof were mingled in his words, as if to chide his friends for their fear of the unseen and to cheer them with his fellowship, as he had so often done before. Now to one, now to two, now to groups of many or few, he revealed himself in an air of ineffable spirituality, and with an art worthy of his dignity. There is no hint of the uncanny, no trace of the unnatural, but a sense of reality made the more impressive by a reserve which would confirm without satisfying a merely morbid curiosity" (Joseph Fort Newton).

> There are many in our day who confess that they regard the human life of Jesus as the most beautiful and morally perfect life which has ever breathed our air. But such was not the faith in Christ on which the Church of Christ was built. For we must not forget that the Scriptures which tell us of the human life of Jesus are the same Scriptures which tell us, also, of his supernatural revival and continuance after death. We have no higher authority for believing that Jesus ever lived at all than we have for believing that he rose from the dead and appeared amongst men (John A. Hutton).

III. The Resurrection of the Dead, verses 50-58. Human nature in its habitation of flesh and blood cannot take possession of the Kingdom of God; nor does corruption take possession of incorruption. "The argument is that such a spiritual body as he has been speaking of is absolutely necessary in the Kingdom of God." Behold, I tell you a mystery: some will be living at the last trump (1 Th. 4.16; Mt. 24.31; Rev. 11.15) when Christ shall come again, and they will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet-call; and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. Paul hoped for the return of Christ during his own lifetime.

When this has taken place, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, when the glorious body is received, then will the resurrection triumph over sin and death, they shall be no more, and law shall be no more, for it will not be necessary. Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. "The victory is ours, thank God! He makes it ours by our Lord Jesus Christ," Moffatt's translation.

Wherefore, let us be steadfast, unmovable, persevering in the work of the Lord, for we know that it will not be thrown away.

> "If I believed in immortality as you believe in it, as you profess to do, I should live a far better life than you appear to live. I should strive more earnestly and bear more patiently. I do not think I should ever be troubled with a fear, or worried with an earthly burden. I think it would be all sunlight and joy if I believed as you do in eternal things—in resurrection and a life beyond in which all things will be made right" (Harriet Martineau).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

That he hath been raised, verse 4. At this time there were four conceptions of the future: first, absorption into God; second, transmigration of souls, or living in another body; third, living in one's own body, embalmed for the purpose, or gathered from the four winds of heaven by a miracle at the resurrection at the last day; and fourth, life in a disembodied state in a shadowy underworld. Out of the resurrection of Christ there grew a fifth conception respecting the future life: a strong, firm belief in the personal resurrection and the personal immortal life of the dead, based upon and inspired by faith in the fact that Jesus Christ had died and had risen again from the dead—Lyman Abbott, in The Life and Letters of Paul.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The passage chosen for our Easter lesson is from one of the two great chapters of Paul's letter to the Corinthians, the other being the thirteenth, the pæan of love. This fifteenth chapter contains the earliest written historical proof of our Lord's resurrection. It was written before the Gospels, probably in A.D. 54 or 55, only about twenty-five years after the resurrection itself,

when many of the witnesses were still living, and is therefore the most valued of all the historical evidences of the resurrection.

The appearances of the Risen Lord are given in chronological order, but those to the women and to the two unknown disciples on their way to Emmaus are omitted.

Many of the Corinthians, who did not disbelieve in the resurrection of Christ,—a better way of putting the case, apparently, than to say they believed in it,—still had no belief or hope of their own life after death. To convince them of their own future as well as to strengthen them in their faith in Christ's resurrection, Paul wrote this wonderful chapter. After recalling the historical evidences of Christ's resurrection (verses 1-11), Paul shows (verses 12-19) that the denial of the resurrection of the dead logically leads to denial of Christ's resurrection, thus overthrowing the whole Christian faith. In verses 20-28 he speaks of the consequences of Christ's resurrection; in verses 35-49 he discusses the questions, "How are the dead raised? In what kind of body do they come back from the tomb?"; in verses 50-57 he answers the question, "What will happen to those who are still alive when Christ returns": declares that all will be transformed, and then the prophecy of Isa. 25.8 will be fulfilled. Finally he closes his argument with a practical exhortation.

During his second missionary journey, Paul spent eighteen months at Corinth, then a great maritime city, the capital of the Roman province of Achaia, or Greece. It was to the church which he founded there that he wrote this letter which we call First Corinthians. He wrote it from Ephesus, probably in 57 A.D.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Watch the trend of our younger generation which is for the moment not captured by the great faiths of the Christian Church. It would be false to say that they are in large measure unmoral or ignoble; but it is true to say that in the measure in which they are unreligious, in that same measure they are ineffective, for they have no passionate convictions born out of an eternal realization waking in their souls. They do not believe greatly. Therefore they do not strive greatly. As I look into the faces of young people now who tell me that they consider that belief in immortality makes no difference, I see in them the unconscious but none the less vivid refutation of what they say. It "does" make a difference for them and in their every hour. It is holding them back from creative enthusiasms which ought to be theirs. It is making them go lamely and indifferently into the great arena of our world's moral and spiritual needs. It is breeding in them a subtle sense of the inferiority of spirit as against the weight of material fact. No mystic sense of an unconquerable meaning is within their souls; and in the high castle of our life's ideals they are likely to become mere jesters, proud of their modern cap and bells, instead of knight-errants, riding forth to gallant service in the world.—W. Russell Bowie.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

PROOF AND POWER OF THE RESURRECTION

Beginning the Lesson. The One Volume Commentary briefly traces through the Bible the doctrine of resurrection:

The doctrine of resurrection and future life was not clearly revealed in Old Testament times. Death was commonly regarded, not as the end of all things, but as followed by a shadowy existence, not worth calling a life, cut off from all its joys and even from God himself (Ps. 6.5; 88.5, 12; Isa. 38.18). So the rewards and punishments set before Israel in the Law were temporal ones (Dt. 28). But God gradually led his people on to clearer light. Their consciousness of communion with God was so strong that they felt death could not end it (Ps. 73.24-26). They felt a future life was required to vindicate God's justice. Isaiah (26.19) speaks of a national resurrection; Daniel (12.2), of an individual one. The hope gradually grew stronger. In our Lord's day the Pharisees held to it firmly, though the Sadducees denied it. But our Lord's resurrection changed what was previously only partially revealed into

a "sure and certain hope" (2 Tim. 1.10). Not only did it prove the truth of his claim to be the Son of God (Rom. 1.4), and assure men that his sacrifice had been accepted (Rom. 4.25); but it is appealed to by Paul as a call to Christians, in virtue of their mystical union with Christ, to live no longer in sin, but to God (Rom. 6.4); and it is the pledge that we, too, shall rise again (1 Cor. 15; 2 Cor. 4.14; Rom. 8.11, etc.).

The Quest of Spiritualism. Significant is the rapid spread during recent years of what is called Spiritualism. Whatever we think about Spiritualism, can anybody see that vast crowd of pilgrims thronging "the road to Endor" and not be impressed by it? "Poor silly dupes," some one may say, "poor silly dupes, every one of them." Well, perhaps; though that is not language that some of us find it easy to use where men like Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and F. W. H. Myers are concerned. But dupes though they may be, at least they are not indifferent; the old unconcern is gone; men want to know—"If a man die, shall he live again?"—George Jackson, in British Preachers.

The Nature of the "Spiritual Body." Paul reasons that there is a "natural body" and a "spiritual body." He believed that the "natural body" returns to the dust whence it came, but that the "spiritual body" survives the stroke of death.

There have been many discussions about the nature of the "spiritual body," the general outcome of which is, as far as Christians are concerned, that its presence in the natural body is the sole rational explanation of human life's mysteries. Biologists and physicians assume its existence and attribute to it mental causation and the healing of certain diseases. Indeed, Gaskill's work on The Involuntary Nervous System argues that there is an intimate association between the two "bodies." In the transformation which death effects, God gives the soul a form which pleases him, and adjusts human personality to its new environment.—S. Parkes Cadman, in The New York Tribune.

The Persistence of Personality and its Final Destiny. All through his exposition Paul distinguishes—clearly and consistently—the flesh and sensual natural body of man from the potentially-immortal body, or Personality, which he associates with the Holy Spirit. If it be asked why Paul used the apparent paradox "spiritual body," why he did not simply speak of the resurrection of the Soul, the reason is simple, profound, and immeasurably important. Indeed, it is the crux of the whole matter. Paul was eager to make it plain that the resurrection means, as it meant for Jesus, more than that some vague, filmy, spiritual essence of man persists after death. Such an essence might evaporate, melting, like the airy spirits evoked by the fancy of Shakespeare, "into thin air." He wished to insist, from the fact of the resurrection of Christ, that the complete personality of man, with full knowledge of and responsibility for his earthly life, survives. Though the brain will decay along with the rest of the natural "flesh and blood," the memories which we imagine are stored there will exist in the spiritual body. Thus, after death, we shall know one another—"today thou shalt be with me in paradise"—remember our loves and hatreds, our secret sins, our deeds of righteousness, and our struggles toward goodness. The resurrection merely of the soul would leave room for the idea of the weary, joyless, far-extending transmigration of soul, bound to the old Wheel of Destiny endlessly turning. Whatever truth or place the fact or idea of reincarnation may have in the story of the spirit on its way to human personality, when it arrives it has a life of its own. From that dreary round Jesus set us at liberty, brushing it aside and leaving it behind forever. Only those who know the pall which hangs over all Oriental thought can realize how great is this emancipation—for which let us praise God and give thanks!

But survival is one thing, and immortality is another. Though Paul teaches that the complete personality of man, deprived of his material vesture of flesh and blood, survives death, he does not teach that all which thus survives is immortal. Only the good, the true, and the beautiful endure. In our personality, apart from the flesh, there is much that is unworthy, evil desires, degrading passions, low motives. They are part of the corruption

which cannot put on immortality. They must be purified away and perish. There is nothing in the physical ordeal of death to disinfect us morally. Nor is there anything in death to petrify us morally, much less to put an end to growth or decay. Both ideas are utterly wrong. The finality of death is physical, not moral, not spiritual.

Only the good is immortal, only the true is everlasting. Love of God is older than evil, more profound, and has in it the secret of unknown redemptions. As the Shepherd left his ninety-and-nine safe in the fold, and went through night and storm to find one lost lamb, unhappy and unresting till it was rescued, so God will not tarry nor rest till every wandering soul is redeemed. No one need be dogmatic. No one need set a date. But it is permitted us to believe, with the great and simple Lincoln—yea, even as we believe in God—that in the long last it is "all or none," and in the final analysis it will be seen that the moral life of humanity, no less than its hope, is grounded upon this faith.

Thus, both as regards the persistence of personality and its final destiny, only the Christian revelation is adequate and satisfying. Other faiths preach other creeds, but the Gospel of Christ is alone full, perfect, and sufficient as an explanation of the world in which we live and of the God whom we believe to have made it. All that is good, true, or beautiful must be immortal in God; and, because he has made us capable of such qualities, we too must be immortal in him. By as much as we gain these qualities, by so much do we realize the eternal life in time, and are set free from the shadows that haunt our human way. Here, too, in our Christian revelation, we have the assurance that the eternal life is no cheerless world of unsubstantial ghosts—a pale image and shadow of the life that now is—but a kindly, home-like fellowship where we shall meet in the fullness of an ennobled humanity, and resume the old affections with a deeper and warmer intimacy. Slowly, inevitably, or soon or late, this mortal, all that is hateful to ourselves and others, will be redeemed by the law of the Heavenly Death—the death, that is, of all that is unheavenly within us—yielding to the life of God in us; and then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory.—Condensed from a Sermon, by Joseph Fort Newton.

How to Enter into the Meaning of Easter. Theologically, Easter is the authentication of Christ's claim to be the Son of God, blessed forever, and the Captain of mankind's salvation. Historically, it marks the birth of the Christian Church, the greatest movement for human betterment which the world has seen. But its deepest meaning is personal, and must be appropriated and realized by each of us individually. We must make up our minds to live the risen life today—to seek the things that are above—to prefer moral and spiritual ends, the noble aim of wisdom and the strong and enduring growth of character, to all moods and purposes begotten of these natural bodies which must shortly disappear, to be replaced by the spiritual body. It is only as we do this in high scorn of the low motives, which are restricted to earthly time as their sphere, that we enter into the heart of the meaning of this festival of the resurgent and invincible power of divine love. And, when we do so, our new way of living, in the inner felicity which it imparts, gives us all the evidence we need or want, that the hope which came to earth on the wings of the dawn of the first day of the week after our Lord's passion is no chimera of the distraught fancy, but is as strong, as substantial, as dependable as God himself.—Richard Henry Stafford, in The Christian Century Pulpit.

This Easter. How good it would be for us if this bright Easter Day could show us immortality and so set some of us free! There are some things that you are afraid to do, some right word you are afraid to speak, some wasteful or wicked habit you are afraid to give up, some self-culture that you are afraid to undertake, some attempt to be useful in some little enterprising way from which you shrink out of a feeble fear of what people will say about it, out of a fear of the little world. You would get rid of that fear instantly if you realized your immortality and stood in the midst of the great world of your eternal life, as the mists that have hung thick and damp in the valleys scatter and are lost as soon as they struggle up into the free

air above the hilltops. What is there in scorn or criticism, that dies the day it is born, that can terrify, however it may pain, the man who is to live forever? He is free. He has entered into the glorious liberty of the children of God.—Phillips Brooks, Sermons.

Topics for Bible Class Discussion. 1. Would there have been a Christian church if Christ had not arisen?

2. How our life here and our hope of life hereafter act and react upon each other.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. See the preceding lesson.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE GOSPEL OF THE RESURRECTION

Beginning the Lesson. What does the word "gospel" mean? Then what is the meaning of our lesson topic? The good news, the glad tidings, of the resurrection. You know the wondrous story told in the Gospels, how the sorrowing women came to the tomb where Jesus had been buried, bearing in their hands the spices which were their offerings of love, and how they became the bearers to the disciples of the joyful, glorious tidings that Jesus was risen. "He is risen! Risen! Risen indeed!" the words echoed and reëchoed among them that Easter Day, and that evening they looked into the face of their living Lord.

During the forty days following Jesus' resurrection he appeared to many people: who were they, as Paul records them in his letter to the Corinthians? Have you noticed that in each case they were his friends, that he manifested himself only to those who loved him and longed to see him? He did not appear to Pilate or Caiaphas or the scribes and Pharisees or the rabble of Jerusalem. And it is the same now; he does not manifest himself to those who neglect him or are indifferent to him.

Celebrating Easter in Jerusalem. In The Atlantic Monthly several years ago a man who had lived in Palestine as a boy (Abraham Mitrie Rihbany) gave an interesting account of the way the Easter festival is celebrated in the Greek Church there:—

"Our priest often said that the picture of the Virgin looked very sad on Good Friday and smiled on Easter. On Good Friday I flew over the hills to gather wild flowers with which the cross was covered in a little coffin, in commemoration of the burial of Jesus. Soon after midnight, on Saturday, the church-bell pealed the glorious message of the resurrection. I woke with the words, 'Christ is risen!' on my lips. 'Indeed he is risen!' was the answer. I kissed my parents' hands, and we all proceeded to the church to enjoy the glorious Easter ritual.

"The supreme moment for me during the Easter mass came when Satan was vanquished by Christ. The entire congregation, following the priest, marched three times around the church, each carrying a lighted taper. Then all marched out of the church, only one man, who represented Satan, remaining inside. He closed the church door and stood close behind it, to prevent the risen Lord from entering into heaven.

"The priest who represented Christ approached the door with the multitude behind him and in a most solemn voice chanted the words of the psalmist: 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in!' The man inside said in a sneering tone, 'Who is this King of Glory?' 'The Lord of Hosts,' said the priest, 'he is the King of Glory!' Thrice was the chant repeated; then the hindering Satan, vanquished, barked like a dog, and the priest forced the door open and marched in with the multitude, chanting, 'Let God arise and let his enemies be scattered!' "

We Want to Know. A young officer in the Great War was just going into battle. "I wish you would tell me what you think about it, padre," he said to the chaplain of his regiment. "Is there really anything afterwards? I'd like you to tell me, as man to man, what you actually think about it. Do we go

on living afterwards in any sort of way, or"—he struck a match to light a cigarette. A gust of wind blew the match out. Perhaps it was that which suggested his next words: "Or do we just go out? I know the Creed," he went on, "but that's not what I want. I want to know what you really believe yourself, as a man, you know. You mustn't think I'm an atheist," he said, "or a skeptic, or anything like that; I'm not. I used to go to church pretty regularly. I used to go to communion sometimes, with my mother, you know. I never doubted about any of the things I was taught. I just took them as they came. I suppose they were all right. Anyhow, I didn't bother. But now I want to know."

"I didn't bother, but now I want to know." "The words indicate, in their challenging sincerity and directness," a British preacher comments, "the change that has come in the minds of multitudes of the men and women of this generation toward the great question of life after death. Twenty years or so ago men were not 'bothering.' Signs of the change are to be read on every hand. Hardly a month, hardly a week, goes by but some new discussion of the old problem issues from the press. It only shows how profoundly men are interested in it."

It is a question in which young men and women, boys and girls, too, are deeply interested. The apostle Paul tells us what we want to know in his letter to the Corinthians. Let us study it thoughtfully. (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

The Master Will Be Found Faithful. "I seem to be a bit afraid of what lies beyond the darkness," a dying man confessed to the country doctor who had been his life-long friend. "But, Sandy," the doctor reminded him, "you have served God faithfully, you have trusted him and were never put to confusion. He will not fail you at the last." Just then the door of the sick chamber was thrown open. The doctor's faithful dog rushed in and leaped in friendly frolic on his master's breast. "Sandy," said the doctor, "you see what has happened. I left Ralph out there in the darkness when I came in to see you; he has been feeling lonely. He has come in and through the closed door he heard my voice. Through that door he came to where the voice was calling and he found his master. Sandy, it will not be different with you. The darkness deepens and you hear the voice that calls you, and there, as here, the Master will be found faithful.—W. Erskine Blackburn.

An Easter Day Message. Boys and girls of Ohio and Georgia and Connecticut, and of all the forty-five other states that spangle our banner,—so far away from that empty Judean tomb, yet so near to him who broke its seal,—what will Easter, the heart of springtime, mean to you, deep down in your heart, this very Easter Day?

The first message of Easter is the vitality of Truth. Truth cannot be quelled or killed. It is independent of the human thinker. We cannot create nor destroy the Truth. It is. It transcends time and creation. Before Abraham was, Truth is. Easter, visibly showing that positive life conquers negative death, proclaims the basic creed that Truth has been, is and ever will be so. Am I getting beyond you—you, whose brows are knitted as you face the old world, the world that is ever new? Am I juggling with words? Explain it this way to yourself: in the theater the scenic artist employs distance to complete his illusion. You must not go too near. You must beware of familiarity! That lively landscape is just painted canvas and netting. That mellow distance rests on nothing but dusty lumber. With Truth it is all the other way. The nearer you get, the better. Come and see, taste and see, handle and see—these are Truth's invitations. Before even we learn the creed of our religion let us grasp the creed on which all creeds repose—that you cannot get behind Truth nor will it ever disappoint you. The nearer the fairer; the nearer the clearer; the nearer the dearer. The trustworthiness of Truth is the creed behind all creeds. That is the first trumpet call of Easter.

"It fortifies my soul to know
That, though I perish, Truth is so."

Again, our Easter disciples will quickly discern a certain glistening purity in

the season urging them toward moral renovation. Consider the Easter lily and be ennobled. I defy you to pluck that saffron crocus in the garden and not feel the chaste charm of springtime. Can you stand on the margin of the woodland, alive to the awakening of spring, and not experience an ecstasy, a standing out from yourself, filled with long, long thoughts of destiny and daring that you would be abashed to confess? Yes, Easter puts spring into the conscience. A throbbing desire for whatsoever things are true and of good report fills these dingy hearts of ours. For, after all, they are dingy. Perhaps it is owing to our very devotion to routine and duty that somehow we rub the glistening sheen from human life. It ought to be such fun, and yet what a succession of chores we make of it! Then comes Easter, with its central conquering Figure, resplendent in the garden, putting to shame our dingy dutifulness as well as our shoddy second-rateness. All of us, the good and the indifferent, need this Easter tonic of the new start, the new method, the new view. To the good, Easter says: "Cheer up, love God and do as you please." And to the rest of us who are discontented with our winter life Easter calls: "Awake! Look forward, and not back! Doff the old ways, don the shining armor of the new day." The central moral message of Easter, I am sure, is this: Be not dingy and dowdy in your dutifulness, but live with a smile and a cheer; or, as an ancient seer expressed it, "Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing."

This putting on of shining moral armor, this starting out anew, suggests a third message of Easter to the modern girl and boy. It is the message of the necessity of newness. Now, some people interpret Easter newness as simply newness of clothes. There is a certain moral value in new clothes. They encourage self-respect. And sometimes we can change our mind when we change our clothes. Thus far, then, changes of raiment serve a useful turn. The boy who wears a bright new tie or the girl pleased with her nice new hat on Easter morning is behaving naturally. Neatness is laudable. Trigness is a little compliment that we pay society. But listen to this, the dictum of a keen observer, the head of a large department store: "Easter is a distinctly selfish period. At that time nearly every one who enters my store is bent on some purchase for his or her personal use. On the other hand, at Christmas all is changed. Every purchaser is pretty certain to have in view one or two gifts that he can make." That is our own experience. We remember the jolly crowds of jostling, bundle-laden Christmas shoppers, their mystery and humor. We have seen, too, the tense acquisitive faces of the Easter purchasers.

Easter a selfish season! How comes it so? If we give presents to friends and the needy at Christmas time because of the Big Present once lovingly given to the world, shall we celebrate Easter, the feast when the Gift was made ours forever, by merely decorating ourselves and making presents to ourselves? For repentance we are enjoined to rend our heart and not our garment. For grateful praise not new clothing but renewed character will be the proper medium. Try not to let the innocent symbolism of a bit of finery degenerate into the selfish slavery of clothes. It is wide of the mark of the season's message. Easter withers in the oppressive vacuum of selfishness. But the sunny freshness of altruism makes it blossom with meaning.

Easter is the heart of springtime. Let it prove the gate for us into a fresher and freer realm. Believe more fundamentally, live more brightly, share more readily. The beauty and the lilt of spring are divine suggestions to us children of men to rise from our dead selves to higher things. Behold and listen! With untutored praise the birds and the flowers about us seem to celebrate our Easter Day. They offer all their gayety and all their gladness. Shall our springtime spirit be less fresh and less complete than theirs? —Samuel S. Drury in The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermon.

The Lord is risen indeed,
He is here for your love, for your need—
Not in the grave, nor the sky,
But here where men live and die.—Richard Watson Gilder.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. See the preceding lesson.

LESSON II—APRIL 12

THE PRODIGAL SON

GOLDEN TEXT: There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. Luke 15.10

LESSON Luke 15 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 55.1, 2, 6-11

LUKE 15.11 And he said, A certain man had two sons: 12 and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of "thy" substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. 13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country; and there he wasted his substance with riotous living. 14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want. 15 And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. 17 But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: 19 I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. 20 And he arose, and came to his father. But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. 21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son. 22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23 and bring the fatted calf, "and" kill it, and let us eat, and make merry: 24 for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Criticism of Scribes and Pharisees, verses 1, 2.

II. The Parable of the Lost Sheep, verses 3-7.

III. The Parable of the Lost Piece of Silver, verses 8-10.

IV. The Parable of the Prodigal Son; the Son Sinning and in Want, verses 11-16. As we first see the prodigal son, he is a picture of supreme selfishness. He demands from his father the portion of his property that would legally be his (see Light from Oriental Life), and upon receiving it he betakes himself to a far country.

> "Every one of us is making some demand upon life. It may be shouted from the housetops for all the world to hear, or advertised in every word and act of our life. The whole cry of some men is, Give me, give me! Never mind the price. Never mind what it costs of the finer things,—the love, the honor, the joy of a clean soul, the pain of others. 'Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me'" (James Reid).

How far will selfishness carry one if he follows it to the end? It carries the prodigal steadily downward. In the far country the wayward boy has his reckless fling. He becomes a spendthrift and a reprobate—he wastes his substance with riotous living. He loses his fine feelings, his friends, his good food, his good garments, and at last he comes to a field and the company of swine. Even the husks or pods of the carob tree given the swine are welcomed as food, for he is in sore want.

> Riotous living may have for us no lure, but we may be guilty, nevertheless, of squandering our portion, be it youth, talents, education, time, opportunity, life.

V. The Son Coming to Himself, verses 17-19. Referring to Swan's great picture of the Prodigal Son in the Tate Gallery, London, W. L. Watkinson said: "It is a masterpiece. The prodigal son himself is a very melancholy figure, and as for the swine they are simply fiendish, most diabolical beasts. But what

struck me most of all is that the great painter had put in a few dabs of red. That is the poetic touch. In his dark cartoon Swan has painted in a few red poppies." There is a bright spot in the dark picture of the parable—the prodigal "comes to himself."

You know the old saying, "Experience is a dear school, but fools will learn in no other." The far country has had its lessons for the prodigal. In our second picture we see him at the turning point in his career. He is looking sadly around at the company to which his folly has brought him. Shall he remain with these swine, or go back in disgrace to his father's house? Back in that home, he reminds himself, the servants have bread to spare, while he himself is perishing with hunger. Then he faces his guilt. He makes no effort to put the blame for his condition upon some one else or upon circumstances, nor does he try to minimize his wrongdoing, but humbling himself in the dust, he makes his great resolve: "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.'"

> "'I will arise and go to my father.' In other words, when a man comes to himself he sees faces, and faces are the magnetic centers even of the social fabric. The great words in life are not wages and work, and wealth, but father, mother, children, friends. My impression is that not many people see faces. They see only what they call facts; economic facts, or something of that kind. The worst of our corporate life is that it is so destitute of faces. The deepest fact we have is human understanding. I take it that when a man really comes to himself he comes closer to his kin" (F. W. Norwood).

"'I have sinned against heaven.' When a prodigal says 'I have been a fool,' 'I have been unlucky,' there is no conscience in it. But when a man says, 'I have sinned,' why, that is religion, and every man when he really comes to himself, comes to God. There is a God, a holy God, and a man's reckless breaking of his contracts and riotous wasting of his substance is a sin against heaven" (F. W. Norwood).

> All sin is a sin against God because "it injures the soul which God labors to preserve, it wrecks character which God strives to save, and it is a blow at the kingdom of righteousness which God is laboring to establish."

VI. The Return and the Father's Forgiveness, verses 20-24. The prodigal immediately carries out his high resolve. He returns in rags and tatters, a gaunt and unkempt vagabond.

> "It is often a long journey from a resolution to its realization. The journey is frequently so long that it is never completed, and the resolve never becomes a reality. This is true because in so many instances the good resolution has nothing to back it up except a tainted life and a weakened will. In the will of the prodigal there was still life and power."

We can picture him as he travels the long weary stretches back to his home, rehearsing in his mind the appeal he proposes to make there. How will his father receive him? He has ventured on no greater hope than to be received as a hired servant. But his father's love is far larger than he dreams. While he is yet afar off his father sees him and is moved with compassion; he runs to meet and kiss him.

> "Yet a great way off he saw me, ran to kiss me as I came;
> As I was my father loved me, loved me in my sin and shame" (Terstiegen).

The boy begins his confession, but he does not get to his request to be made a hired servant, for his father does not let him finish. The most important thing in the father's mind is to give his son's self-respect back to him, and he calls his servants, bids them bring the best robe, the ring for the lad's hand (the symbol of position and honor) and shoes for his feet (which no slave ever wore).

"Put them on me—robes of glory, spotless as the heavens above;
Not to meet my thought of fitness, but his wondrous thought of love"
(Terstiegen).

Then the father bids his servants kill the fatted calf that they may feast and rejoice over the coming back to life of the boy who was dead in trespasses and sin. In the attitude of the father toward a wayward boy we have a faint picture of the love of God for all his wayward children. He never ceases to love them. The parable is really a parable about God. It makes use of human fatherhood at its best to interpret divine Fatherhood.

"The father requires of his son no painful penance, no morbid moping over the bitter past; to the boy's bleeding heart goes forth the father's healing, reviving touch, he kills the fatted calf, calls in the neighbors to welcome him home. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ requires of his children no unhealthy lamentation over the past, but only that, confessing humbly our wrongdoing, learning watchfully its hard lessons, we go on in their light to the better sonship of the days to come. In the true Christ life there is never any time for mere morbid regrets. The more wasted time in the past, the less time to waste today" (Alexander MacCall).

VII. The Portrait of the Elder Brother, verses 25-32. Although the joyful reception accorded the prodigal when he returns repentant seems to speak the last word, yet the parable does not end here. For the enforcement of the lesson which Jesus designed by the parable to teach the carping Scribes and Pharisees, the part which may be called the Parable of the Older Brother is the very point of the whole argument. These chief religious leaders of the day had murmured because Jesus welcomed sinners; they were like the older brother.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Give me my portion of thy substance that falleth to me, verse 12. In the Yale Babylonian Collection, there is a law which is translated thus: "If a son say unto his father and his mother, 'Not my father, not my mother,' from the house, field, plantation, servants, property, animals, he shall go forth: and his portion, to its full amount, he [the father] shall give him. His father and his mother shall say to him, 'Not our son.' From the neighborhood of the house he shall go."

Professor A. T. Clay says of this law: "It is of special interest in connection with the Parable of the Prodigal Son, inasmuch as it shows that it is based upon legal grounds. The law legislates with reference to a son who, desiring to venture upon a separate career, renounces his sonship, receives his wages or portion, after which he leaves his home and is thereafter legally separated from the family. The legal banishment contained in the words of the law, 'Thou art not our son,' etc., was prudential in character. The son had no further claim upon the estate. As a son he was legally dead. The son in our parable does not make a request, but rather a demand: 'Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me'; and after he receives it, he gathers all together and takes his journey into a far country. In his extremity, knowing that he is legally dead as a son, he can at least ask to be taken in as a hired servant."

This Babylonian law dates from the time of Abraham, and we cannot be sure that it obtained in Palestine in the time of Christ, yet it most interestingly illuminates the parable.

He sent him into the fields to feed swine, verse 15. To a Jew "a feeder of swine" was in the lowest depths of degradation. Jews so abhorred swine that they would not even speak of them by name, calling them instead, "the other things." The polite Moslem today who mentions swine hastens to add, "begging pardon for the allusion."

The husks that the swine did eat, verse 16. The carob tree grows in arid, rocky soil where nothing else will thrive, and its "husks," or pods, are today a substitute for grain among the very poor on the edge of the Sahara as well as in Syria.

And fell on his neck, and kissed him, verse 20. The Oriental robe is open about the throat, and it is a common custom for friends to kiss each other on the neck.

A ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, verse 22. Shoes were worn only by freemen, never by slaves. The giving of the ring was an emblem of restoring him not only to freedom, but to dignity and power. The ring, which in the East is always also a signet or seal, is only worn by men of position or property. It is the symbol of social rank, equivalent to armorial bearings in European countries.—Tristram, Eastern Customs.

Bring hither the fatted calf, verse 23. "On the large farms in Palestine there was usually a calf being fatted for special occasions. It was roasted and served whole."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The three parables of the lost—the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost son—were given by Jesus as an indication of the rights of publicans and sinners in the Kingdom of God. One of the chief complaints of the Pharisees and Scribes was that Jesus was too sympathetic, too friendly with the social and moral outcasts of life. Luke refers to this in the opening verses of our chapter: "Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto him to hear him. And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured saying, 'This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them.'" It was in response to this accusation that Jesus gave these three parables. The purpose of the Parable of the Loving Father, as it has well been called, is to enforce the truth of God's infinite love and ready pardon for his erring sons, and to protest against the narrow-mindedness and selfishness of the Pharisees, as typified in the older brother.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

We all resent as gratuitous the formally appended moral. We dislike it not so much because we disagree with it, as because we feel it to be an insult to our intelligence. This was our quarrel with the Sunday-school book of our childhood. If the author made his hero behave like a cad, or if the crown of the heroine's lauded virtues seemed to be feeble-mindedness, it was not worth while specifically to call us to emulation. On the contrary, if the villain had been truly and convincingly and despicably villainous, we found it out, and there was no need of a tacked-on warning.

Mrs. Barbauld once said to Coleridge that she admired The Ancient Mariner, but that it seemed to lack a moral. Imagine! To which the poet responded, "Moral! it has too much moral!" His artistic sense thus asserted its rebellion against the didactic fashion of his day, and made confession that he had mistakenly yielded to this fashion—a mistake which we all instinctively realize in the reading, since the explicit moral seems so plainly to mar an otherwise almost perfect structure.

In studying the parables of our Lord we are continually impressed with the fact that their moral values are inherent in their characters and situations. The stories of the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan contain in every sentence the convincing note of reality, and there is no necessity to add the formal statement. "Go ye!" is not a didactic summary, but a tremendous challenge. The lessons of the Master Teacher did not need to be placarded.—The Christian Century.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE CHURCH AND THE REPENTANT SINNER

Beginning the Lesson. The parable of the Prodigal Son has not a fact in it, from beginning to end. There was no prodigal son, there was no famine; there was no father, no fatted calf, no elder brother. This was a beautiful story which Jesus told; and he made it up, every word of it. But it is nevertheless so true,—so vitally, so eternally, so searchingly and blessedly true,—that all the studious saints from the beginning of the gospel to this present day, have not discovered all its truth. Nothing can be more true than the parable of the prodigal son.—Dean Hodges, in The Human Nature of the Saints.

Our Duty to Help Young People to Spiritual Attainment. The phrase which arrests us most as we read the compact narrative of the prodigal's undoing is not the one which tells about riotous living, nor the reckless squandering of his patrimony, nor his hunger for swine husks, nor his unshod feet and the loss of his tunic; it is rather the one which says that when he was at the bottom of his fortune "he came to himself."

He had not been himself, then, before. He was not finding himself in the life of riotous indulgence. That did not turn out after all to be the life for which he was meant. He missed himself more than he missed his lost shoes and tunic. That raises a nice question which is worth an answer: When is a person his real self? When can he properly say, "At last I have found myself; I am what I was meant to be"? Robert Louis Stevenson has given us in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde a fine parable of the actual double self in us all, a higher and lower self under our one hat. But I ask, which is the real I? Is it Jekyll or is it Hyde? Is it the best that we can be, or is it this worse thing which we just now are?

The Prodigal Coming to Himself
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Which is the real self, then? Surely this higher possible self, this one which we discover in our best moments. The Greeks always held that sin was "missing the mark"—that is what the Greek word for sin means—failure to arrive at, to reach, the real end toward which life aims. Sin is defeat. It is loss of the trail. It is undoing. The sinner has not found himself, he has not come to himself. He has missed the real me. He cannot say, "I am."

If that is a fact, and if the life of spiritual health and attainment is the normal life, we surely ought to do more than is done to help young people to realize it and to assist them to find themselves. We are much more concerned to manufacture things than we are to make persons. We do one very well and we do the other very badly. Kipling's The Ship that Found Itself is a fine account of the care bestowed upon every rivet and screw, every valve and piston. He pictures the ship in the stress and storm and each part of the ship from keel to funnel, describes what it has to bear and to do in the emergency and how it has been prepared in advance for just this crisis. Nansen was asked how he felt when he found that the Fram was caught in the awful jam of the Arctic ice-floe. "I felt perfectly calm," he said. "I knew she could stand it. I had watched every stick of timber and every piece of steel that went into her hull. The result was that I could go to sleep and let the ice do its worst." With even more care we build the airplane. There must be no chance for capricious action. The propeller blades must be made of perfect wood. There must be no defect in any piece of the structure. The gasoline must be tested by all the methods of refinement. The oil must be absolutely pure, free of every suspicion of grit.

But when we turn from ships and airplanes to the provisions for training young persons we are in a different world. The element of chance now bulks large. We let the youth have pretty free opportunity to begin his malformation before we begin seriously to construct him on the right lines. We fail to note what an enormous fact "disposition" is, and we take little pains to form it early and to form it in the best way.

The fact is that temperament and disposition and the traits of character which most definitely settle destiny are at least as much formed in those early critical years of infancy as they are acquired by the strains of heredity. We

must be as greatly concerned to form virile character in our boys and girls and to develop in them the capacity for moral and spiritual leadership in this crisis as we are concerned over our coal supply or our industries. There are ways of assisting the higher self to control—dominate the life, ways by which the ideal person can become the real person. Why not consider how to do that? —Rufus M. Jones, in Spiritual Energies in Daily Living.

The Christian's Job. Some years ago a book by A. S. M. Hutchinson was very popular—If Winter Comes. Do you recall how Effie came in her trouble to the home of Mark Sabre and the great-hearted man took her in? Do you recall the words in which he explained the situation?

"I felt that the girl had a claim on us. She'd turned to us in her abject misery for help, and that alone established a claim, even if it had come from an utter stranger. It established a claim because here was a human creature absolutely down and out come to us, picking us out from everybody, for succor. You've got to respond! You're picked out. You! One human creature by another human creature. Responsible to the same God. You've got to! You can't help yourself. You're caught. If you hear some one appealing to any one else you can scuttle out of it. Get away. Pass by on the other side. Square it with your conscience any old how. But when some one comes to you, you're done, you're fixed. You may hate it. You may loathe and detest the position that's forced on you. But it's there. You can't get out of it. And if you've got a grain, a jot of humanity, you must, you must, respond to that cry of this your brother or your sister made as you yourself are made."

"How did the prodigal get his start from the swine pens toward God and heaven," Joseph Nelson Greene asks in his Portrait of the Prodigal. "Did some good soul in that far land come down to his distressing level and put a kindly hand on his shoulder and whisper kind words into his ear and plant a new ambition in his soul by telling him that his father was waiting back home to receive him with love and bless him with plenty? We do not know. But we do know that a job like that is a Christian's job. The far lands are near at hand. Prodigals are no rarity in these days. Opportunities for that sort of service are abundant. The Bible says that one of the greatest things a man can do is to start a prodigal back home. He that winneth souls is wise. One of the greatest failures that can come to a Christian life is the failure to help somebody toward manhood and God. It ought to be the aim of every church and every Christian to make it impossible to have it said that a prodigal was in the midst hungry for love, for life, and for God, 'and no man gave unto him.'

"We sometimes hear it said of an unfortunate sinning man that he is 'beyond redemption.' But is a man ever beyond redemption? The one who has caught the spirit of the gospel teaching and has learned the mighty power of God to save, can never question the possibility of even the worst man being redeemed. The Bible specifically declares that though a man's sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow. Moreover, experience shows that the Bible statement is true, for the records abound in cases of men whose sins were not only scarlet but black, and yet they have been brought to a marvelous whiteness of life and fruitfulness of service in the Kingdom of God.

"What, then, ought to be the attitude of Christians toward those who are woefully depraved? The answer is twofold. It ought to be faith in the possibility of redemption, and encouragement in the process of redemption. One of the meanest and most unchristian things a man can do is to look coldly upon the efforts a bad man is making to be good, and scornfully say, 'He won't hold out'; or to grieve his heart with spiteful references to the shameful past which the man wants to forget."

The Heavenly Father's Son. It happened the other day that I was halted along the streets of Boston by a jam of men and women, struggling towards one center, pushing, craning their necks. Stopped, I too, struggled for a nearer view. I, too, craned and stared. I, too, asked the crowd around, "What's happened?" Then I saw a limp form lugged in the arms of a stout policeman, heard the babble of foolish lips, watched the punches and protests of uncertain hands. The policeman dragged the fellow ruthlessly towards the swarthy van. A girl's voice at my elbow shrilled, "Come along, Sue! 'Tain't worth looking

at—he's only a drunk." But another voice, the voice of an older woman, broke in protesting hotly, "Only a drunk! I tell you, Mary, that man's some mother's boy." Here lies the secret of the universe unriddled for you. When you have come to see all men in that divine relation—as some mother's boy—as your Heavenly Father's boy—you have mastered life, you have started rightly to live with your fellows, you cannot err towards them.—James Church Alvord.

The Time to See the Prodigal. Dr. J. H. Jowett points out the duty of the church here:

I would like the power to see homesick prodigals when they are still away in the far country. It is the pathos and the tragedy of the Church, and of so many of the Lord's disciples, that we see the prodigal only when he knocks at the door and when the long return is over. We know him when he kneels at the pentinent bench, or expresses himself in some outward confession. We do not see him before confession springs to his lips, and while a sullen indifference appears still to sit upon his face. I would have the sight which can see the beginnings of the better life, while the outside still seems violently antagonistic.

The Parable's Message to Youth of This Age. There is the father's home. There is no need for you to leave it, but if you want to go out into the world and make your experiments, the father will divide the substance and let you go, though his heart will be with you all the time. You may come back having made a fortune, and with your heart as hard as nails. You may go out into the world and waste your substance, that is, your sentiment and feeling and all the beautiful things in your nature, in riotous living, spending it on harlots. Yet there is still the father's home. Some day such a young man or woman may say, I will arise, and go to my father; and I tell you, if you do, that there will be no flaming sword between you and that Garden of Eden which you were so foolish as to leave. There may be heart-break in the father's nature as the result of what you have done, but he will welcome you home, and forgive you, and love you still, and start you afresh. Youth is riotous and exuberant. The sins of the flesh are no better and no worse than the sins of the imagination and the mind, and the God who sends Jesus Christ into the world to manifest his love—the Christ who goes to the Cross that we should know that love—will still welcome back to the Father's home. This youth made his experiments and made them badly. "I will arise." Therein his hope, for it is when we begin to realize that the universe is friendly and that its purpose is good, and that it springs from one whom we can trust as Father and as Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we begin to take fresh hope and fresh courage; we begin to fight our way back; we begin to solve our problems, to see how life may be lived, not simply to our own advantage, but for the good of others. Therein lies Christ's message to youth today. Let youth arise!

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. Our duty regarding the homeless, jobless, friendless boy.

2. Do we welcome prodigals to our church? Do we strive to aid them to higher things? What is the right way to treat them?

3. Preventive evangelism. It is easier to keep children in the Kingdom of God than it is to bring them back after they have gone out of it, to say nothing of the superior moral value of a life never broken or arrested in its growth by sin. It is not necessary for our children to become spiritual prodigals. We dare not say that any preventive influences would keep all of them from rebelling against God, for the human will is free; but we dare believe that the effort required to conquer ten rebels would be sufficient to assure the unbroken loyalty of a hundred.—John T. McFarland.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What details of our parable are the mere setting of the story, not given as information as to facts? 2. What was the sin of Dives? 3. What is the force of the saying by Marcus Aurelius that "Even in a palace life may be well lived"? 4. Who said and on what occasion, The poor ye have always with you? 5. Has our church lost the love of the poor? 6. Who is the poor at your gate: whom can you help? 7. What proportion of your means do you use for others?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE FATHER'S WELCOME TO THE WANDERING SON

Beginning the Lesson. The younger son in our parable said to his father, "Father, give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me." There is a happy aptness here in that word "falleth," though it is the entirely correct term to use of a division of property like that in the parable. The younger son, however, looked on good things as coming of themselves. They fell upon him as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath, so to speak. It never occurred to him that before there is any falling some one must do some lifting to get the good things to the place from which they can fall. The father had lifted the possessions to the value from which they could come down in blessing upon his son's head.

It never seemed to occur to the boy that before there could be a division there had to be an addition—an accumulation. If he had been asked how all this property got together in such amounts as to make possible his taking his share, he might have replied—especially if he had moved in certain jovial school circles—that things are here because they're here. When we think things are here because they're here we are not likely to value them overmuch. It took the experience of hunger in the far country to teach the boy the value of the things that he had taken as a matter of course.—F. W. McConnell, in The Just Weight.

What were the boy's experiences in the far country? (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

One Way in which the Parable was Told. John B. Gough used to tell how an ignorant Bible-reader would gather a rough crowd about him, and with open Bible in hand would begin his talk in this way: "Fellers, I've got a book here that tells the strangest story you ever heard. It's about a cove that got all the money the old man could give him, and then run away." Then he pictured to them the Prodigal Son as a youth from a respectable London family throwing away his opportunities, leaving his home, spending his time in gin-shops and gambling-dens. When he had described the youth's misery in words his hearers could well comprehend and then had brought him at last, pentinent, to his father's arms, "right on the door-step of his home," uncouth men and women sobbed aloud.

God's Way with a Human Soul. An only daughter left her country home for the great city. For a year or more letters came back each week to the father and mother—brave, cheerful letters giving glimpses of Mary's struggle to get a foothold in the great city, and then, one who knew the city better than did the white-haired farmer and his wife might have read between the lines of the weekly letters that the battle was going against their girl. One summer afternoon the rural postman left no letter. Weeks followed days and still no letter came. The frantic old folks tried to find their girl but could get no trace of her. The darkness of a great city had swallowed her up.

Sitting beside their roaring fireplace, one wintry night, heavy hearted, they questioned how a message of love might reach their wayward daughter. The mother turned to the plush-bound album on the center-table and took from it a picture, their girl in all the bloom and freshness of dawning womanhood. Then, with a swift intuition of a mother's heart, she took a pen and slowly, painfully wrote beneath the picture these words,

Mary: The latchstring is always out for you at the old home place.
We love you still.

Father and Mother.

They sent that picture to the Salvation Army in the city, and a Salvation Army lassie, who had herself never known a mother's love, tacked it to the wall of a hall where the meetings were held.

One night that girl, passing the open door, heard strains of familiar music, a melody which awakened slumbering memories of her childhood, and she went in and sat down. She glanced around, and then she saw the picture on the wall. She stared, surprised and awed. There, from the wall, the innocence of her own girlhood looked down upon her. As she gazed, she saw once again the old home farm nestled among the orchard trees, saw the little school-

house in the valley and the white church on the village common. And in that moment she was in hell. For over her swept the dark consciousness of the thing she was.

Then moved by an impulse she drew near to the picture, and read the words written beneath.

She saw the tear stains which half blotted out the straggling writing of her mother's hand. That message of love was to her remorse-racked spirit as a glimpse of heaven. Is it to be wondered at that a few evenings later a repentant girl crept up the silent country road of a New Hampshire village, lifted the latch of the door of her girlhood home, and was clasped in her mother's arms?

Behold a parable of love's—yea, God's—way with a human soul.—Condensed from a Story by Harry W. Kimball.

The Lost in the Great Cities. Once a year the police commissioner of New York City publishes a list of persons who have disappeared. Last year nearly four thousand dropped out of sight. Many were found, yet there remained at the end of the year seven hundred and twenty-five to be set down as "still missing."

What chapters in the book of life this record holds! From North and East and South and West, over thousands of miles, the great candle of the metropolis draws its human moths. They dance a little while in its light, and some find places of permanent safety and happiness. Others, perhaps less wise, perhaps only more tender, are scorched by the flame, drop with singed wings, and crawl away to hide in the first dark, friendly corner that presents itself.

And this is but one side of the tragedy. The other end of the thread leads, it may be, to some far-off country home, where a chair, still placed at the table, remains unoccupied, and a name, although never out of mind, remains unspoken.

Police captains in any large city will tell you of quiet, patient figures that go from station to station, and from hospital to hospital, asking their pathetic questions, peering ever hopefully at prisoner and patient, till at last they bring themselves to walk down the line of marble slabs and uncover the face of one after another of the sheeted figures in the morgue. The police captains will also tell you that the agony of those searchers who find at last the thing they seek is often less than the suffering of those who are unsuccessful; who must continue to rise up in the morning and lie down at night in the awful shadow of uncertainty.

For many of those recorded as "still missing" there will be no home-coming. The tide has carried them out, and the merciful sea has wrapped its mystery about them. But for those who still live—who remain hidden because of shame or lack of success, or some fancied wrong or unhappiness in the home they left—how great is the responsibility! Who shall absolve them if they do not say, "I will arise and go to my father"!—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons. Whether or no the race is to the swift, it certainly never falls to the "fast."—Youth's Companion.

The past cannot be changed, but the past can be left.—W. L. Watkinson.

The prodigal repented and was forgiven and restored to his father's home at last, but it would have been far better for him had he never been a prodigal.

The true life can never be lived until the selfish prayer, "Give me," gives way to the better prayer, "Make me."—J. Wilbur Chapman.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What parable have we already studied which is about a man who had given no thought to the responsibility which his wealth brought him? 2. What did he plan to do, and what happened to him? 3. What do the purple and fine linen of the rich man in our parable represent? 4. Do you know any one whose whole thought is about clothes, food and amusement? 5. Did Lazarus go to Heaven because he was poor and Dives to Hades because he was rich? 6. What was the sin of the rich man? 7. Are we accountable for what we do not do as well as for what we do? 8. Is it right to spend all your money for yourself? 9. What is your class doing for the poor? 10. Do you give all the money you think you can for good causes?

LESSON III—APRIL 19

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

GOLDEN TEXT: Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. Matthew 6.20

LESSON Luke 16.1 to 17.37 DEVOTIONAL READING 1 John 3.13-18

LUKE 16.19 Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day: 20 and a certain beggar named Lazarus was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 and desiring to be fed with the "crumbs" that fell from the rich man's table; yea, even the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom: and the rich man also died, and was buried. 23 And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things: but now here he is comforted, and thou art in anguish. 26 And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they that would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us. 27 And he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house; 28 for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 But Abraham saith, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one go to them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Parable of the Shrewd Steward, 16.1-13.

II. Pharisaic Self-righteousness, 16.14-17.

III. Concerning Divorce, 16.18.

IV. The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, 16.19-31. We call this rich man of the parable Dives, making use of the Latin word for "rich man." Dives was clad in purple and fine linen: his outer garment was dyed purple, and his inner garment was made from a sort of flax that grew on the banks of the Nile, so finely woven as to be almost transparent. "Purple and fine linen" is a phrase used to this day for luxury and ostentation.

> "We remember with sorrow and compassion the idle rich, who have vigor of body and mind and yet produce no useful thing. Forgive them, Heavenly Father, for loading the burden of their support on the bent shoulders of the working world. Forgive them for wasting in refined excess what would feed the pale children of the poor. Forgive them for setting their splendor before the thirsty hearts of the young, luring them to theft or shame by the lust of eye and flesh. Forgive them for taking pride in their selfish lives" (Walter Rauschenbusch).

Lazarus (the name is a contraction of Eleazar, Helped of God) was a beggar who was brought to the rich man's gate, where he hoped to be fed from the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. So helpless was he that even the dogs came and licked his sores. Wretched dogs roamed the streets and lived upon the garbage that was thrown out from the houses. The suggestion is that the dogs were kinder than the rich man, or else that they increased his misery by rasping his sores.

When the beggar died, he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom. "'Abraham's bosom' is a Jewish name, not of heaven, but of an intermediate state of bliss, in which the souls of the just await the resurrection" (One Volume Commentary). In his parable Jesus made use of the well-known rabbinical fancies—angel bearers, Abraham's bosom, the two divisions of Hades, the separation and yet communication between them—but his doing so does not mean that he accepted these fancies for the truth. His purpose in

Briton Riviere, R. A.

THE DOGS CAME AND LICKED HIS SORES

his story was not to reveal the nature of the life hereafter, but to teach that retribution overtakes the sinner, and in doing this he deliberately adopted the picture language then current which admirably suited his purpose.

The rabbis said, "The fire of Gehenna has no power over the sinners of Israel, for Abraham descends and rescues them from it." In accordance with this thought, the rich man, who had also died, appeals to Abraham from his place of torment and begs him to send Lazarus to his aid, if only with water on the tip of his finger. But Abraham bids Dives remember that in his lifetime he had had the good things while Lazarus had had the evil; now Lazarus is rewarded while he is punished.

"Son, remember." Abraham would have Dives recall his past. Is there any faculty upon which our joy or sorrow depends more than upon the memory? "Oh, full of scorpions is my mind!" was Macbeth's way of expressing the horrors of his memory of guilt.

"Abraham's words seem for a moment to mean that there is for each of us a fixed amount of good and evil fortune, and that if we have pleasure and prosperity here, we must not look for pleasure and prosperity hereafter. But there is plainly some mistake about that. Our Lord did not mean that. That is not his doctrine of the providence of God. That is not his interpretation of the fatherhood of God.

"No; the words are to be understood like the sentence in the Sermon on the Mount, 'They have their reward.' The men who give alms or say prayers in order to be seen of men have their reward, such as it is. The people who devote themselves entirely to the material satisfactions of life receive their good things. They enjoy the blessings of the senses. Dives had received his good things. He had decided, consciously or unconsciously, that what he supremely desired was to succeed in business and to have a good time in society. That is what he desired, and he got it. He who seeks the pleasures of the senses only, shall have the pleasures of the senses only, and after that the judgment. The rich man had heard such sermons in a dull, conventional, confused way, with his eyes shut: but they had meant nothing to him. Moses and the prophets had been no more to him than the saints of the painted windows.

"That is, the life which ended in this total failure had been a life of the body only. That was the cause of the damnation of Dives. The man had lost his soul because he had never taken the slightest pains to save his soul. He had no place with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob because he had never taken the least interest in the things that patriarchs and prophets and men of God care for. He was no more fitted for that excellent company than a tramp on a freight-car would be fitted for a lecture in philosophy. He had addressed himself wholly to that which gratifies the senses. To the higher part of his nature, to that which survives the body and is everlasting, he had paid no heed. And he went to his own place, as they said of Judas. That is what happened to him. He went to his own place, where he properly belonged, as we all shall go. It is an illustration of the great saying: Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Dives had sown to the flesh and of the flesh had reaped corruption. Lazarus had sown to the spirit, and of the spirit had reaped life everlasting" (Dean Hodges).

The guilt of not using possessions aright is the same whether they are small or great. The way to avoid the danger that lurks in the possession of riches is to employ them in the service of God and man.

Moreover, there was a great and inseparable gulf between them, the parable further says. Here we have a picture of spiritual separation. What now seemed truly desirable to Dives was absolutely beyond his reach. Neither his need nor the charity of another could bridge that separating gulf. Spiritual attitudes and aptitudes could not be his.

As if to imply that he himself had lacked sufficient warning, Dives next begs Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his five brothers, that they may be spared his fate. "Dives in the second part of the Master's picture is about the same man as in the first, very willing that Lazarus should be treated as a convenience to carry water and go and warn his brothers of their danger!" (F. J. McConnell).

"They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them," is Abraham's answer. "Nay," persists Dives, "if one go to them from the dead, they will repent." But Abraham declares that if they will not heed the words of Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded by one risen from the dead.

"If men can be inhuman with the Bible in their hands and Lazarus at their gate, no revelation of the splendor of heaven or the anguish of hell will ever make them anything else."

V. Concerning Causing Others to Stumble, and Concerning the Duty of Forgiveness, 17.1-4.

VI. Concerning Faith, and Concerning Unprofitable Servants, 17.5-10.

VII. The Grateful Samaritan Leper, 17.11-19.

VIII. Concerning the Coming of the Kingdom, 17.20, 21.

IX. Concerning the Coming of the Son of Man, 17. 22-37.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

He was clothed in purple and fine linen, verse 19. A man's position and wealth were indicated by his dress. Special colors, too, were worn by different classes of people—a custom which is still kept in some places. Purple, which was very costly because the shellfish which yielded the dye were rare, indicated the highest degree of wealth. "Porphyrogenitus," born in the purple, was the proud title of one of the Constantines.

He was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom, verse 22. The rabbis said, "None can enter Paradise but the just, whose souls are carried thither by angels." "When an Israelite departs to his eternal home, the angel in charge of the garden of Eden, who receives every circumcised son of Israel, introduces him into the Garden of Eden."—One Volume Commentary.

And seeth Abraham afar off, verse 23. The rabbis placed Paradise in sight of the place of torment, and were familiar with the idea of conversations among the dead. There is a rabbinical story not unlike this parable. "There were two partners in crime in this world, one of whom repented before his death, but the other did not. After death the one was carried away and placed in the company of the just; the other in the company of the wicked. The latter saw the former and said: 'Woe is me, for there is respect of persons in this matter. He and I robbed together and murdered together, and now he stands in the congregation of the just, and I in the congregation of the wicked.' They said to him, 'Thou fool, it was in thy power also to have repented, but thou didst not.' He said to them, 'Let me go now, and become a penitent.' But they said: 'Thou most foolish of men, dost thou not know that this world in which thou art is like the Sabbath, and the world from which thou camest, like the eve of the Sabbath? If thou providest nothing on the Sabbath eve, what wilt thou have on the Sabbath?' And he gnashed his teeth and gnawed his own flesh." —One Volume Commentary.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Our chapter begins with the parable of the Unjust Steward, addressed apparently to the disciples, in which Jesus commends the practical wisdom of the steward and which he ends with the words, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Money must be regarded as a means, not as an end. The Pharisees, "who were lovers of money," heard this teaching and derided it. They held that the possession of riches proved the owner to be a favorite of God's. But Jesus said to them: "Ye are they that justify themselves in the sight of men; but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God," and told them the story of the rich man and the beggar.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

It is easily possible to waste the lesson period in worse than futile discussion about the hereafter upon which this parable has no bearing, albeit many so

misinterpret it, as did Dr. Cadman's correspondent who inquired whether Jesus meant to teach by this parable "a flaming hell of endless duration and eternal torture." Those who believe it pictures hell must also believe that spirits have tongues and fingers. Let us not waste time over the wrappings and lose the kernel of the story. It is "a social story, not a theological one." Like a scene on the stage there had to be a setting for the lesson which was the sole purpose of the parable. See page 17 of our Introduction.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

RIGHT AND WRONG USE OF WEALTH

Beginning the Lesson. Prince Metternich, during the early part of the last century the absolute and all-powerful prime minister of Austria, was sitting one day with some of his noble guests on the terrace before his castle. Down in the deep valley before them flowed the Rhine, while on the mist-clad hills of the opposite bank peasants, men and women, were busy gathering the ripened grapes. "Gentlemen," said Metternich, "look at this scene. It is my ideal of the State. Down there, the people working and laboring in the fields; here, looking down upon them, wealth and nobleness, and an impassable gulf between the two."

Evidently he knew the words of our parable, but had not learned the parable's meaning.

Wherein Lay the Sin of the Rich Man? Some one has said that from one point of view the picture of the man might be highly attractive to many people. They would say: "Oh, I rather like him. After all, he keeps a good table, and he has an open welcome for his friends, and when he invites his friends to his table he puts before them ample food. The feasts which he gives are quite what they ought to be, and they are up to the expectation of his guests. And so there can be no harm in a man who is thus hospitable and kindly."

Yet Jesus portrays in this rich man the tragedy of a soul. (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

The Essential Sin of Lazarus. In The Just Weight, Bishop Francis J. McConnell has this to say about the rich man:

"One of the earliest commentators—away back in the first Christian centuries—remarked on the selfishness of the rich man who could demand that Lazarus leave his blissful abode with Abraham to come to minister to those tormented in the flames. The key to the parable is the attitude of the rich man toward Lazarus.

"Lazarus was no problem to the rich man. The rich man saw the beggar at his gate day after day, and the contrast between his own purple and fine linen and the rags of Lazarus made absolutely no impression upon him. He took himself and his station as a matter of course. In the earthly life he had acted on the theory that there was a great gulf fixed between his life and that of Lazarus, so that the Lazaruses could not pass over to the side of the rich and the rich could not pass over to the side of the Lazaruses. The rich man failed to see any duty marked out for himself in the presence of the glaring contrast. This is perennially the most dangerous temptation that the rich meet—the temptation to believe that a great gulf is fixed here and now between the rich and the Lazaruses. If any prophet comes along to point out that the gulf ought to be bridged or filled in, the rich man is tempted to cry, 'Away with him.'

"After death the rich man said: 'I am in anguish in this flame! How shall I have relief? It would, indeed, never do to ask Abraham to come with water for my parched tongue, but there is Lazarus! Send him! No matter what the pain to Lazarus, what is Lazarus compared to my comfort?' This attitude toward Lazarus was the essential sin of the rich man. The rich man was not necessarily a heretic concerning God, but he was a heretic toward Lazarus. In some ways it is worse to be a heretic toward Lazarus than a heretic toward God. For heresy toward God may be merely a failure to understand, whereas heresy toward Lazarus may be a failure of kindliness and good will."

The Responsibilities of Privilege. If you are rich you must frankly own

your wealth and take the position which it gives with all the duties that belong to it. If you have been born in the very center of church light, you must not make believe to yourself or to other people that it is all the same as if you were a heathen. It is as bad for the rich man to make believe that he is poor and so shirk his responsibilities as for the poor man to make believe that he is rich and so ruin himself by extravagance. First own your place with that frank acceptance of the facts of life which is the only real humility and then let your privilege solemnize you. Frankly owned not hidden as if it were something of which you ought to be ashamed, let it bring you into and keep you in the very presence of him who gave it to you. Let it hold you with a grasp that you cannot escape before the judgment seat of God. And, above all, know that it is a trust and never dare to make a luxury out of it. Understand that your wealth or your education, or your religious light is not thoroughly made your own till you have begun to use it for other people.—Phillips Brooks, in New Starts in Life.

Divine Love for Humanity. History tells us the common people owe their rise and reign to Christ's sympathy, teachings and influence. When Christ placed Dives and Lazarus upon an equal plane he set thrones tottering and tyrants trembling. That parable also gave the impulse to all the institutions that make for the glorification of the people. It gave to Robert Burns his poem, "A Man's a Man for a' That." It gave to France the watchword, "Liberty, Fraternity, Equality." It gave to England the motto, "No bishop no king." It gave America our liberties. Indeed, in that single parable there is the essence of ten thousand declarations of independence, for free institutions take their rise in this fact—Christ emphasized individual worth and liberty as the beginnings of happiness and progress.—Newell Dwight Hillis, in The Contagion of Character.

The Growth of Greed. In a little play entitled The Will, James M. Barrie powerfully portrays the growth of greed. In the first scene a young man dictates his will to a London solicitor. He wishes to leave all he has to his wife, but she is present and insists upon his remembering two of his cousins and a convalescent home. Twenty years later he is making another will. He now desires to leave his wife only a life interest in his considerable estate, while she protests angrily against this and against his leaving anything to others. Twenty years later still the man attempts to make a third will. His wife is dead, his son he calls "a rotter," his daughter has married against his wishes. He starts to dictate to the lawyer. "I leave it—leave it—my God, I don't know what to do with it!" Then in a fit of anger he shouts to the lawyer: "Here are the names of the half dozen men I've fought with most for gold, and I've beaten them. Draw up my will leaving all my money to be divided among them, with my respectful curses, and I'll sign it."

Gladstone's Wise Words. In regard to money—there is a great advantage in its methodical use. Especially is it wise to dedicate a certain portion of our means to purposes of charity and religion, and this is more easily begun in youth than in after-life. The greatest advantage of making a little fund of this kind is that when we are asked to give, competition is not between self on the one hand and any charity on the other, but between the different purposes of religion and charity with one another, among which we ought to make the most careful choice. It is desirable that the tenth of our means be dedicated to God, and it tends to bring a blessing on the rest. No one can tell the richness of the blessings that come to those who thus honor the Lord with their substance.

Two Epitaphs. Near the village of Leamington, Warwickshire, in a small country churchyard connected with a beautiful ivy-covered church, may be found a stone on which is this inscription:

Here lies a miser who lived for himself,
And cared for nothing but gathering pelf.
Now, where he is, or how he fares,
Nobody knows and nobody cares.

The other epitaph is in St. Paul's Cathedral in London. Among the many monuments to England's heroic dead which this building holds is one which at

once arrests attention by its simplicity and beauty. It is a plain sarcophagus on which rests a recumbent statue of noble presence. Beneath the figure are these words:

Sacred to the memory of
General Charles George Gordon,
Who at all times and everywhere gave his strength to the weak, his substance to the poor, his sympathy to the suffering, his heart to God.

Was there ever a more beautiful and significant epitaph?—The Youth's Companion.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. The way to perdition is paved with moral neglect. The debt of privilege can no more be escaped than the debt of taxes. To whom much is given, of him will much be required.—C. R. Brown.

2. How to help the poor. Benjamin Franklin says: "I think the best way of doing good to the poor is not in making them easy in poverty, but in leading or driving them out of it." "The attitude which would deny to the needy anything better than 'the crumbs' which fall from the table of plenty is sure to bring its proud possessor into moral perdition."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the force of the Parable of the Unjust Judge? 2. What does James say about prevailing prayer? (Jas. 5.13-18.) 3. Read Tennyson's poem, Saint Simeon Stylites, and compare Simeon's boastful words with the Pharisee's in our second parable. 4. What does Ps. 119.145-152 say about whole-hearted prayer? 5. What did Jesus say about faith in prayer? (Mt. 21.22.) 6. About submission in prayer? (Lk. 24.42.) 7. About answered prayer? (Mt. 7.7-11.) 8. Why should one pray?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE CURSE OF SELFISHNESS

Beginning the Lesson. In a book entitled Adventures Among Birds there is a charming story about a blackbird and a thrush. These birds always came together to a lawn in Penzance whose owner was in the habit of throwing crumbs there for the birds. The owner noticed that the blackbird fed the thrush, picking up the crumbs and putting them into the thrush's mouth. Looking more closely, she discovered that the beak of the thrush had been cut off close to the head, probably by a steel trap, and it was incapable of feeding itself.

In the parable which we study today there was a beggar who was incapable of feeding himself and died for lack of such friendly aid as the blackbird gave the thrush. What is the story?

The Parable Told in China. A missionary in China writes that the parables of Jesus are the inspiration and the mainstay on the mission field today. They "get home" among the Chinese. They understand them. Abstract doctrine they cannot follow. A theological discussion would drive them away. But a talk in pictures captures their imagination and influences their conduct.

A native preacher was captured by robbers, Sen the Glorious, his friend and colleague calls him.

"Preach!" commanded the bandits.

"And what shall I preach about?" asked Sen.

"Preach to us from the proverb, 'Chieh fu chiu p'in,'—'Borrow from the rich to save the poor.'"

Sen drew some neat, well-printed, illuminated leaflets from the folds of his gown. He turned them over in his hand until he found the one that he sought.

"This is what you want," he said, and held aloft the story—parable and pictures alike on a single effective sheet,—of Dives and Lazarus. Thirty-five armed men closed in around him. Seldom has there been such an audience of malefactors and jail-birds, each one holding his rifle, his pikestaff, or his knife. And Sen preached! He told them of the rich man who fared sumptuously every day, and of the poor man who sat on his doorstep; of the one who was wicked despite his wealth, and of the one who was good despite his want.

As Sen developed his theme their hard features softened, their harsh looks

became kindly, and as the sermon approached its climax they could no longer forebear.

"Tui liao!" they cried, "tui liao! Right on the nail!"

It was the parable that excited their sympathy and evoked their applause. Robbers they might be, and men guilty of every crime in the calendar, but the parable captured their minds and touched their hearts. They released their captive, and released him with honor.

The Sin of the Certain Rich Man. Dives was rich, but that is not a sin. He was clothed in purple and fine linen, but that is not charged against him. What, then, do we find blameworthy in his life?

> "Clothed in purple and fine linen he stood before me,
> But naked and bare was his soul in the eyes of God!"

He cannot be charged with any overt sin, but his whole life was wrong toward God and toward man. His sins were sins of omission. He failed to do what he ought to have done. His riches gave him the power of being of great service in the world, and he merely lived for himself. He shut his eyes to the trouble around him. He went through life without seeing his brothers' needs. He was selfish through and through.

The Rich Man and Lazarus From a Painting by Edwin Knapp Limson

Great riches test their owner. Jesus severely condemns the one who loves money for itself, or for what he himself only can get out of it. Covetousness and selfishness are great sins.

The Curse of Selfishness. At fifty Madam X—— was a little, shriveled, agile woman, who worked her slaves harder and fed them better than any one of the neighboring planters. She had spent many winters in Washington when her husband was Senator, and had herself become a keen politician. After his death she remained on her plantation childless and alone, her chief object the accumulation of money.

Her nephew was heir to the estate, in which she had only a life interest, but she refused to acknowledge or even to see him. He entered college, but gave up study, asserting that he should soon have a fortune without work. A profession was proposed to him, and other employment, but he answered that Madam X—— was in feeble health, and that in all probability he should be a rich man in a few months.

Madam X——, hearing this, smiled and—lived on.

Ten years passed—twenty years. The heir was a middle-aged, idle, poor man, dependent on his friends. Madam X—— was thinner and feebler, but—alive. When he applied to her for aid she replied sardonically: "He who waits for dead men's shoes goes long barefoot."

Twenty more years crept by. The heir, a helpless beggar, without a profession or trade, too ignorant and lazy to earn his bread, was placed in the county poorhouse, where his manners were imperious and haughty. "She is ninety," he said. "Soon I may become the richest man in the country."

Madam X——, still hoarding her money, still clutching at every advantage, lived on.

Ten years later the heir died in the almshouse.

Madam X——, who was then a hundred, said, smiling, "I have won the game."

She lived two years longer. The game was ended. Neither of the contestants obtained one moment of comfort or happiness from the money for which they had struggled all their lives.

Into the other life they could not carry a penny.—The Youth's Companion.

Who Is Laid at Your Gates? After reading our parable aloud one Sunday evening at home, a father asked his family what they would do to help the world if they happened to be rich enough (in a story told by Charles Herbert). After some discussion the father summed up their remarks. "George says mission ships and missionaries, Cyril says founding scholarships, Dora says dollies for poor girls who haven't any, Mamma says nurses for poor women when they are ill. But you, Ethel, have not said what you would do. Have you made up your mind yet?"

"Well, it all seems so far away—mission ships and things of that sort," she replied. "Cyril would have to find his poor, clever boys; Dora would have to find her girls who hadn't any dolls; and Mamma would have to go looking for the women who wanted nursing. It isn't like poor Lazarus, who was just outside the rich man's house."

"Well," cried her father, "what would you do?"

"I think I'd help Aunt Ellen's children, now that Uncle's dead."

"Yes, dear," said her father, "your idea is the best. She is 'laid at our gates.' What a different world this would be if every one looked after the people whom God laid at their gates!"

Ah, wouldn't it? Can you think of any one who is laid at your gates? Of any one for whose help this class might be responsible? What shall we do about it?

Would You Have Done This? William Law was once a poor young tutor in the household of the Gibbons of Putney—the household that afterward gave to the world its greatest historian. In those days Mr. Law used to think a great deal about the widows and orphans whom he had known so well, and helped so often, at his old home at King's Cliffe. "If," he used to say to his new friends at Putney, "if only I were a rich man, those poor women and children should never again have need to beg for bread!" But it was no good saying "if." He was not rich; he was scarcely less poor than the people he pitied. One day, however, he had occasion to visit the city. Standing in the doorway of a bookshop in Paternoster Row, looking at the passing crowd, a strange experience befell him. A young man, in the dress and with the manners of a gentleman's servant, stepped out of the crowd and asked him if he were Mr. Law. On receiving an affirmative reply, he put a letter into his hand. When Law opened the letter, he found inside it a banknote for a thousand pounds. No name accompanied the note, and, by the time that Law looked up from the letter, the messenger had vanished. Before Law stepped from that doorway he made his resolution. He took the first coach to King's Cliffe, and, before he returned to Putney, had made arrangements for the erection and endowment of a residential school for fourteen poor girls.—F. W. Boreham, in The Home of the Echoes.

Sentence Sermons.

I ask not wealth, but power to take
And use the things I have aright.—Phoebe Cary.

Possession no man blesses
While self is all his care.—Lynch.

We do not own our wealth; we owe our wealth.—F. G. Peabody.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What was a Pharisee? 2. What was a publican? 3. Why did the Pharisee pray? 4. How was the Pharisee's spirit wrong toward himself, his neighbor, and God? 5. What parable have we studied which gave Jesus' counsel about humbling oneself? 6. What does the first parable teach about true prayer? 7. What does the second teach about true prayer? 8. What does Jesus say in Mt. 6.5-15 about sincerity in prayer? 9. Can you get anything you want through prayer? 10. Why does God not always answer prayer as you wish? 11. Would you talk to your earthly father only when you have some request to make of him? 12. What is true prayer?

LESSON IV—APRIL 26

HOW TO PRAY

GOLDEN TEXT: Lord, teach us to pray. Luke 11.1

LESSON Luke 18 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 61

LUKE 18.1 And he spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint; 2 saying, There was in a city a judge, who feared not God, and regarded not man: 3 and there was a widow in that city; and she came oft unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. 4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; 5 yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest she wear me out by her continual coming. 6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge saith. 7 And shall not God avenge his elect, that cry to him day and night, and "yet" he is longsuffering over them? 8 I say unto you, that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

9 And he spake also this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and set all others at nought: 10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I fast twice in the week: I give tithes of all that I get. 13 But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, God, be thou merciful to me a sinner. 14 I say unto you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. Prayer Should Be Earnest, verses 1-8. For the purpose of teaching his disciples that they should always pray and should pray without discouragement, Jesus gave them a parable. The word "always" should be taken literally, The One Volume Commentary decides, for "the whole lives of the faithful should be, in Origen's words, 'one great connected prayer.'"

> "The sort of illustration which rises to my mind in connection with prayer is that of the dog which wants to go for a run, and lies on the carpet with his eyes on you while you write a letter. He doesn't bark or whine, but just looks, watches. If you raise your eyes he wags his tail. His appeal though voiceless is simply eloquent. It is an attitude which expresses a relationship of faith, affection, patience, and of implicit trust in your goodwill. I know of no better illustration of the true attitude of the self towards God; it can truly be called prayer. You see how it implies a previous thinking and recognition. The dog would not do it for a stranger, it would whine distressfully and scratch at the door. But for its master it waits because it knows him" (Bishop Carey).

Men ought always to pray and not to faint: suppose we turn the counsel into a promise: Men ought always to pray and they will not faint, Dr. J. H. Jowett suggests. "When a man faints in the day of adversity it is because a line of communication has somehow been cut, and he has lost touch with his base of supplies. He has become separated from his spiritual resources, and in the heavy demands of the campaign he has begun to lose heart."

There was in a city a judge, so ran the parable, who feared not God and regarded not man. It is thought that such a judge must stand for a heathen judge, since, in the time of Christ, of Jewish judges were required "prudence, gentleness, piety, hatred of mammon, love of truth, that they may be beloved and of good report." To such a judge there came often a widow beseeching him to avenge her of her adversary, to give her justice. "Her adversary was probably a rich neighbor who, taking advantage of the death of her husband, had stolen her land. The offence of violently appropriating the property of widows and orphans is often alluded to in the Old Testament, and forbidden with threats of divine vengeance, Ex. 22.22-24, etc." (Dummelow). For a long

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Eugène Burnand

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men.—Luke, 18.11.

time the judge would not listen to her claim, but finally he became aware that she might wear him out with her continual coming (literally, give him a black eye), and he then yielded to her entreaty and gave her justice.

"And shall not God avenge his elect?" his chosen people (first used of Israelites and then of Christians), questioned Jesus. The argument is: If a man who is so unjust by nature will thus yield to importunity, will not God, who is Justice, heed the prayers of his people? "They cry to him day and night and yet he is long suffering over them."

"In the Solomon Islands we have a class of native dogs that suffer from chronic starvation. As might be expected, they have but little spirit, so that when they take hold of anything, it does not take much to drive them off and discourage them. They have often afforded an apt illustration for our converts of the way many Christians take hold in prayer in the islands —yes, and in the homelands. And I have told them how bulldogs, when they take hold, will die almost before they let go. Many a time since then, a native, ever quick at parable, has prayed, 'O Lord, make us bulldogs in prayer!'" (A Missionary).

"I say unto you, he will avenge them speedily." "Christ comforts his disciples who are discouraged by the persecutions which are even now threatening, by promising that God will visit their persecutors [the Jews and afterwards the heathen] with condign punishment. This was literally fulfilled in the calamities which overtook the Jews and the chief heathen persecutors of the Christians" (Dummelow).

"I have never been deeply interested in any object and prayed sincerely and earnestly for it, but, at some time—no matter how distant the day, somehow, in some shape, probably the last I should have devised—it came" (Adoniram Judson).

"A generous prayer is never presented in vain; the petition may be refused, but the petitioner is always, I believe, rewarded by some gracious visitation" (Robert Louis Stevenson).

"Nevertheless [here Jesus dips into the future], when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" The note of encouragement is followed by one of warning. "It is not enough to pray for the Coming; see that you are ready for it. There is no doubt about the Coming; there is grave doubt about the state of the world at the Coming" (A. S. Peake).

"The words do not necessarily mean the Son of Man's last coming in judgment. Any crisis in the history of an individual, or a family, or a Church, or a Nation, we may speak of as a coming of the Son of Man. And Christ does not suggest the extinction of all faith on the earth, but the possible weakening of the faith illustrated in the parable, the faith that can persevere though deliverance is delayed—not faith, but 'this faith.' By this question, 'Shall he find faith on the earth?' Christ is calling us to watchfulness and importunity and patience. If he came today in some great reformation, who would be found watching? Christ is looking for our faith today. What does he see in us? To every one personally he comes in death. If he thus came to you now, would he find you trusting in him?" (James Owen).

II. Prayer Should Be Humble and Sincere, verses 9-14. Jesus turned now in thought to those who "trusted in themselves that they were righteous" and in their pride of spiritual attainment "set all others at nought." "They were bigots, self-opinionated, self-conceited, dogmatic, and contemptuous—they wore all the attributes of bigotry." To them Jesus gave another parable, or, more strictly speaking, an imaginary incident true to life.

A Pharisee and a publican went up into the temple to pray at one of the regular hours for prayer.

"Prayer has an 'hour,' it has a place, in our life; it is no more to be crowded out than the most vital practice of receiving one's daily food" (C. C. Hall).

The temple was on Mount Moriah and was higher than the rest of the city, therefore Jesus speaks of going up into the temple to pray.

"Two went to pray? or, rather say,
One went to brag, and the other to pray."

The word "Pharisee" means "separated." The Pharisee was a holier-than-thou man, and standing in a conspicuous place (Mt. 6.5), he "prayed with himself." Note that his prayer was not with God but with himself. He began his prayer with "God, I thank thee," but his prayer contains only self-congratulation and censure of others. "He says, 'I thank thee,' but he is not conscious of anything received, only of something achieved. He has brought a prospectus of his qualifications, and would have the Divine endorsement" (Thomas Yates). "He glances at God, but contemplates himself. Indeed, he almost pities God, who but for himself would be destitute of faithful servants" (Alfred Plummer). Contrast Paul's words in 1 Cor. 15.9, 10. He thanked God that he was not like the publican.

Said Booker Washington once: "The man who is down, looking up, may catch the glimpse now and then of heaven, but the man who is so situated that he can only look down is pretty likely to see another and quite different place."

The Pharisee then recalled his virtues to God's attention; unlike others, even this publican, he was not an extortioner, nor unjust, nor an adulterer; he fasted twice in the week (the law required only one fast a year, on the Day of Atonement, Lev. 16, 19, but many Jews fasted every Monday and Thursday), and he tithed all that he had (the law required only a tithing of farm products, the fruits of the field and of the cattle).

It was not the Pharisee's fasting and tithing that were wrong, but his self-complacency and his contempt of others. There is a keen Madagascar proverb which declares that guilt repented of becomes righteousness, but righteousness boasted of becomes the grandfather of guilt.

"The proud prayer has no wings, for it has no conscious need" (Thomas Yates).

"It is better to be ashamed of never having done anything to be proud of than to be proud of never having done anything to be ashamed of" (Youth's Companion).

In contrast to this Pharisee, the publican stood in humble attitude afar off. "The Pharisee can see no use for the tax-gatherer in the temple but to serve as a dark background for the dazzling whiteness of his own soul. The tax-gatherer accepts the judgment; he stands afar off, so that his presence will not pollute the Pharisee at his prayer" (J. E. McFadyen).

"One nearer to God's altar trod,
The other to the altar's God."

Smiting his breast, the publican cried, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." "Then," said Jesus, "this man went down to his house justified [accepted by God, is Moffatt's translation], rather than the other [the Pharisee]." "Not 'made righteous' but 'deemed righteous.' In what was a sort of unconscious lawsuit God decides in favor of the tax-gatherer and his prayer" (A. S. Peake).

"The Master sets the Pharisee and publican in contrast, and his judgment goes against the man who has made some progress in moral attainments, and favors the man who has no victories to show, but only a hunger for victory. The dissatisfied sinner is preferred to the self-satisfied saint" (J. H. Jowett).

For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted; thus Jesus ends his parable.

III. Little Children Blessed, verses 15-17.

IV. The Peril of Riches, verses 18-30.

V. Jesus Foretells his Fate, verses 31-34.

VI. The Sight of the Blind Beggar Restored, verses 35-43.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

They ought always to pray, and not to faint, verse 1. The rabbis taught that God must not be fatigued by too frequent prayer. Three times a day was enough. "If a man comes to address you every hour, you say that he holds you cheap; the same is true of God."—One Volume Commentary.

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus, verse 11. If the fixed time for prayers had come, Dr. Edersheim tells us in Sketches, the Pharisee would stop short in the middle of the road, perhaps say one section of them, move on, again say another part, and so on, till, whatever else might be doubted, there could be no question of the conspicuousness of his devotion in market-place or corners of streets. There he would stand, as taught by the traditional law, would draw his feet together, compose his body and clothes, and bend so low "that every vertebra in his back would stand out separate."

Rabbi Meir declared that salutations of reverence might be given and returned at the natural breaks in the prayers, but in the middle only the salutation of fear might be made and returned. Dr. Horton comments thus: One sees the good Jew reciting his prayers aloud in public with his eye open to return the greeting of the passer-by, and his mind sufficiently unoccupied to reflect whether the person to be greeted was one who demanded recognition from reverence or fear or chance good-will. Such is the praying which is still held efficacious in Roman Catholic churches, where the rosary enables the votary to repeat a certain number of "Ave Marias" and "Pater Nosters" while his eye ranges over the objects in the church and his mind is occupied with other things.

The Righteous Pharisee "I give tithes of all I possess" © Berger-Levrault & Co., 1908

I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, verse 11. In a classification of Pharisees made by rabbinical writers, there is one called "The Pharisee who said, 'Would that I knew of a sin I had committed that I might make reparation by an act of virtue,'" and there is another called "The calculating Pharisee who said, 'My sins are more than counterbalanced by virtues.'" Rabbi Simeon ben Jochai said, "If there are only two righteous men in the world, I and my son are these, and if only one, it is I."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Many of the sayings here are given by Matthew in the last great discourse, chapter 24. Jesus had often spoken about the Kingdom of God. Many had not understood his use of the phrase. When was the Kingdom of God coming? We can well imagine their saying to one another: "This man talks overmuch about the Kingdom of God. He would be a King—but this rabble about him is not a kingdom." To them the phrase meant the coming of an earthly Jewish ruler of great pomp and power, the Messiah who should overthrow their Roman lords and rule the world. Jesus took this familiar phrase and fulfilled it, filled it full, with a new, true meaning. The Kingdom of God is not to be visualized nor localized. It is like a bit of leaven which the woman took and hid in three measures of meal till all was leavened. God's throne is invisible, for it is in the hearts of his followers. God himself is spirit, and his kingdom is a spiritual Kingdom. The second Coming of the Son of Man would be long-delayed and unexpected,

yet they must never cease to pray for deliverance, and to enforce this lesson he told them the Parable of the Unjust Judge.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

The grade down an avenue in a near-by town is steep and the street has a dangerous curve. One day Mr. Jones crossed the avenue at the top of the grade, and found Charlie standing there with closed eyes. Willie could be seen speeding down the hill on a sled toward the acute portion of the curve. "It seems to me you boys could find a safer place to coast," said he to Charlie. Charlie opened his eyes and looked at Mr. Jones reproachfully. "You may have been the death of him," said he. "This is a risky hill, but it's great fun, and we've got a trick to make it safe. One of us coasts while the other stays at the top and prays."

These boys in this true story were passing through the preparatory stages of religion which belong to the savages' approaches to civilization. Such a religion is magic, which tries, not to bring man into subjection to God, but to bring the gods into subjection to man. If the truth could be known, there would be revealed a surprising number of Christians who look upon prayer as a sort of magic by which things may be obtained—largely for oneself and one's immediate friends. Make sure that you eradicate this idea today.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

WHY PRAY?

Beginning the Lesson. When our little company arrived at the hotel in Nazareth we could scarcely ascend the steps because of the crowd of lace sellers who implored us to stop, luggage in hand, and buy their wares. I thought of how Paul had charged Timothy to be urgent in season, out of season, but before we left Nazareth those lace sellers repeatedly recalled to my mind a certain parable which Jesus spoke unto his disciples to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint. Persistency in urging a petition is still rife in that Oriental land. We never left the hotel or entered it, at any hour of the day or evening, without having literally to push our way through that crowd of lace sellers. "My name is Mary," one young woman kept crying out: we were in Mary's town and therefore we should buy from her. We all succumbed to their persistency, even a President of a Theological Seminary, who had kept away from the shops and had no use for lace, bought something of Mary. Since that experience I have had sympathy for the judge in the parable which Jesus told his disciples. What is the parable? Why did Jesus give this parable?

The Privilege of Praying. The privilege of prayer to me is one of my most cherished possessions, because faith and experience alike convince me that God himself sees and answers, and his answers I never venture to criticise. It is only my part to ask. It is entirely his to give or withhold as he knows is best. If it were otherwise, I would not dare to pray at all. In the quiet of home, in the heat of life and strife, in the face of death, the privilege of speech with God is inestimable. I value it more because it calls for nothing that the wayfaring man, though a fool, cannot give—that is, the simplest expression to his simplest desire. When I can neither see, nor hear nor speak, still I can pray so that God can hear. When I finally pass through the valley of the shadow of death, I expect to pass through it in conversation with him.—Wilfred Grenfell.

Why Pray? Bob Graham was speaking with great earnestness.

"But I can't see any use in prayer," he said. "The laws of cause and effect are what rule the world. Wherever a cause is set in motion, a result will appear. Prayer hasn't anything to do with the government of the world. If the world were ruled by some arbitrary monarch, it might avail to petition him, but in a world of law and order, of cause and effect, the necessary thing is to start some cause going. It isn't to fall on one's knees and pray!"

"But it's only in a world of law and order and cause and effect that there

could be any value to prayer," said Dr. Brown thoughtfully. "If effects did not come from causes, if the world did not conclusively show the presence of law, I could never have real confidence in any prayer. But, my dear fellow, can you not see that prayer itself may be a most powerful cause? It itself is a cause that inevitably produces its effects. When you really pray, you do start some cause going! Only God knows all the result."

"Do you mean to say seriously that a man's prayer can really change anything?" asked Bob.

"Nothing is more certain than that it does," replied the rector. "Mind reacts upon mind. Mind reacts upon the body. Every psychologist knows the truth of both statements. Real prayer may produce unlimited effects upon the minds and the bodies of the universe. As to just how all the effects of prayer are produced, I don't profess to know and I don't need to. I don't know how or why the sun has such a marvelous effect upon seeds buried in the ground, either, but I keep on planting seeds and profiting by doing so. You don't at all understand why gasoline in your automobile makes the car run. Yesterday when I asked you about it, you showed that you didn't at all clearly understand the matter, but later you jumped into your car, put your foot on the self-starter, moved the spark and throttle, and away you went. You follow the experience of the race with seeds and with your automobile and elsewhere; why isn't it reasonable to do the same with prayer, which the wisest and noblest men and women of the race for twenty centuries testify has proved the greatest of all helps that men can know?"

"I see it now," said Bob. "It is reasonable to pray. I can see that it is possible for prayer to produce results even if I can't see how. A reasonable man must heed such testimony of value. I'm going to pray!"

"You will begin really to live just when you begin to pray," said the doctor solemnly.—The Youth's Companion.

In Everything by Prayer and Supplication with Thanksgiving Let Your Requests Be Made Known unto God. Jesus is our authority on prayer. What did he teach about making known unto God our requests? His parable of the Importunate Widow is the answer. So are his petitions in the prayer he taught his disciples. So are his words about prayer. "Your Heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him," he tells us, and yet he does not say, "Do not ask"—instead he says, "Ask and ye shall receive": "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father give to them that ask him." "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers unto his harvest," Mt. 9.38; "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive," Mt. 21.22. And so is his own practice in prayer an answer: He went out into the mountain to pray, and he continued all night in prayer to God, Lk. 6.12: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat; but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not," Lk. 22.31, 32; "I pray not that thou shouldest take them from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one: Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word," Jn. 17.15, 20: "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt," Mt. 26.39.

"I bless God—but I pray not," Rousseau declared. "Why should I ask of him that he should change for me the course of things?" he continued. "I, who ought to love above all the order established by his wisdom and maintained by his Providence, shall I wish that order to be dissolved on my account?" Rousseau had a wrong idea about prayer. Prayer is meant, not to change God's purposes, but to accomplish them. "Prayer is a boat-hook, not to draw the land to you, but to draw your boat to the land. It is not a means of telling God what he ought to do, but a means of telling him that we are now ready to accept what he has promised to give us. Prayer is in great part a recognition of the habitual ways of God's working and a throwing of ourselves into coöperation with those ways and laws."

How does prayer help accomplish God's purposes? Why does his action wait so often upon our petitions? Dr. Belden gives this glimpse of a reason: "We have an excellent illustration of the same kind of thing in the relation of modern governments to the people they govern. We are all familiar with

the idea, in the main sound, that legislation should not travel faster than public opinion. The reason for that is that it runs a great danger of provoking reaction through a lack of understanding and appreciation. So it would seem that God's method is, in the main, a method of governing with the consent of the governed. He waits for suffrage of the people. He acts when they ask him to act; and whenever humanity in anything like sufficient numbers desires anything, it usually obtains it—that is a fact of history."

It is one of the deepest instincts of the soul to pray. Every Christian feels the urge of his heart toward prayer. Prayer is the Christian's vital breath, the Christian's native air. To every one there comes a time when he feels with Tennyson that there's

> No help but prayer—
> A breath that fleets beyond this iron world
> And touches him that made it.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. The prayer life of Jesus. Mt. 6.9-15; 11.25, 26; 26.39-44; Mk. 1.35; 6.46; Lk. 6.12; 9.28, 29; 11.1-4; 23.34, 36; Jn. 6.15; 11.41, 42; 17.

2. Prayer in a world of law. See Chapter IV of A Working Theology, by Alexander MacColl; The Meaning of Prayer, by H. E. Fosdick; Quiet Talks on Prayer, by S. D. Gordon; Prayer: What It Is and What It Does, by Samuel McComb; The Double Search, by Rufus M. Jones.

3. If you were God, and I ask the question reverently, would you answer some of the prayers that you ask?—J. H. Jowett.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why did the important office of a tax-collector, or publican, bring dishonor upon a Jew who held it? 2. Why did Jesus not make the same demand of Zacchæus that he made of the rich young ruler? 3. What does "a son of Abraham" mean? 4. Is there true repentance for wrongdoing when no effort is made to redress the wrong? 5. What if it is not possible to make restitution to the one wronged? 6. Will a Christian conduct business in a different way from a non-Christian?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHAT IS TRUE PRAYER?

Beginning the Lesson. A missionary in Burma was much surprised when a young boy and his sister came forward to be baptized. "Of course I would be happy to receive you," he told them, "but has not your father been bitterly opposed to your publicly confessing Christ?" "Yes," said the boy, "but we have kept on asking and asking his permission until he got tired, and now he says for us to do as we please. We are Christians and want to be baptized." This boy reminds one of the widow who kept on asking something of a judge: what is the story?

For what purpose did Jesus tell this parable? What did he mean when he said that men ought always to pray? In St. Leo's Church, New York, the Nuns of Perpetual Adoration are always kneeling in relays at the altar in adoration, throughout all the hours of the day and night. Is this what Jesus desired when he said that men ought always to pray? What did he mean, as the parable shows?

The Parable of the Two Prayers. There is an Oriental story of a sultan who failed to awaken one morning at the hour of prayer. The devil waked him up and told him to get up and pray. "Who are you?" asked the sultan. "Never mind: my act is good, is it not?" replied the devil. "No matter who does the good action so long as it is good." "Yes, but I think you are Satan, and you must have some bad motive," the sultan persisted. "You are the tempter; that's your business, and I wish to know why you want me to get up and pray." "Well," said the devil, "if you had slept and forgotten your prayers, you would have been sorry for it afterward, and penitent; but, if you go on as now, and do not neglect a single prayer for ten years, you will

be so satisfied with yourself that it will be worse for you than if you had missed one and repented of it. God loves your fault mixed with penitence more than your virtue seasoned with pride."

What class of people in Christ's day were as self-satisfied as this sultan would have become, according to the story, because they neglected neither prayer nor fasting? What is the parable which Jesus told about one of these men and a publican? What light does this parable throw upon the nature of true prayer?

True Prayer Depends upon What you Pray for and the Spirit in which you Pray. "Please," said little Jane in her prayer, "make Rome the capital of Turkey." "Oh, Jane," exclaimed her mother, "why did you say that?" "Because I put it like that in my examination-paper today." Do you think her prayer was answered?

The Importunate Widow in the parable had a good case. Her prayer was a plea for justice, which it was right that she should have. Any upright judge would give her justice: this judge had to be importuned because he feared not God and regarded not man. So in coming into God's courts you must have a good case. What about the things for which you ask? Are they merely to satisfy your own pleasure? Is there no selfishness in your heart when you ask for them?

Success in prayer depends upon the spirit with which you pray. The woman was in earnest. Her whole heart was in her supplication. She did not ask justice in a half-hearted way, thinking more about something else than about what she was saying. If we pray drowsily, if our thoughts wander while we pray, we are not truly praying.

"To say my prayers is not to pray
Unless I mean the words I say."

True Prayer is Backed by Effort. The woman could not obtain justice herself. If she could, she would not have bothered the judge. Only the judge could secure this for her. Therefore she was justified in taking her case to him. You cannot expect God to answer the prayers which you should answer yourself. The boys told about on page 162 had not looked out for their own safety as they should: had they any right to ask God to protect them? Should you pray for high marks at examinations when you have not worked hard enough to secure them? Should you ask God to keep you in good health when you keep on doing things which you know will injure your health? Prayer cannot take the place of effort, it is not a means of providing you with things without working for them.

Mr. Moody was present at a prayer-meeting when a wealthy man arose and offered an earnest prayer that the Lord would provide two or three hundred dollars for a certain worthy cause. At the conclusion of the prayer Mr. Moody sprang to his feet and exclaimed, "Brother, I wouldn't trouble the Lord with a little thing like that. I would do it myself."

Frank McGlynn is an actor who had twenty-five years of struggle before he won fame in the great rôle of Abraham Lincoln, in John Drinkwater's famous play. In talking about how the great chance came to him, he said: "Things were pretty black. I had a wife and family depending on me; and for the past few years it seemed as if every circumstance had conspired against us. I was obliged to take almost any opportunity to earn money, because money I had to have. We were down to bed-rock. Then came the Big Chance for which I had waited so long. A man doesn't like to talk about these things, but I think it is shirking an obligation if he does not. You see—we, in my family, believe in asking God's help. And we certainly were in sore need of his help these last few years. So every one of us—my wife, my children, and I myself—had been praying pretty earnestly that we might get it. I think that it's up to me now to say that I believe those prayers were heard and answered. Most of us are quick enough to acknowledge a good turn when any human friend helps us. It seems to me that it isn't quite the square thing to confine the acknowledgment of our gratitude to our human friends." Mr. McGlynn could honestly offer his importunate prayers because he had not spared himself in seeking to answer them.

Prayers and Answers. "Supposing one prayed in the right spirit and with perfect faith, is his prayer sure to be answered?" Bob Graham demanded of his minister.

"It depends upon what you mean by answer," said Dr. Brown. "If you mean, does every one always receive the thing for which he prays, thank God, no, he doesn't. If we did, we should live in the midst of chaos indescribable. Then the world would be ruled, not by an All-Wise Father, but by every ignorant but honest man who prayed. Thank God, that is not the way the world is run!

"But in a deeper sense, every sincere prayer, without exception, is answered. It's a good deal as it was with my granddaughter the other day. The little girl was tired and sleepy and fretful. She asked for something or other, and when it was given her she asked at once for something else. She kept it up for some time. The truth is, she didn't know what she wanted. Finally, her mother just gathered her up in her arms and laid the little one's head on her breast and rocked and soothed her, and the little girl lay there utterly content. The mother did not give her the thing she asked for, but she did go beneath the request and answer the child's need and even the child's desire.

"That," said Dr. Brown, "is why the race has continued to pray generation after generation, in spite of the fact that the things asked for specifically so often are not given. Even when we don't get the specific thing we ask for, we get something so tremendous from the heart of our Heavenly Father that the little thing we asked for, and were denied, by comparison is as nothing at all."

"It's really true, then, that all prayers are answered?" said Bob.

"Every real prayer is always answered," said Dr. Brown. "Nothing in human experience is more certain."—The Youth's Companion.

Prayer Works! Before the State Reformatory was established in North Carolina, a boy who in a fit of ungovernable rage had committed a crime was sent to the penitentiary. As he was only ten years old, the Governor granted the plea of a good man who told him that the boy should not be confined there with such associates, that his character was unformed and he should be given a chance to make good, and if given into his own care the man promised to see that the lad had the right training. Upon receiving the custody of the boy the man placed him in the care of a kind-hearted, Christian woman.

Dr. James I. Vance has told how the lad was taught to restrain his temper. One of the first things this guardian did was to try to teach him about God and prayer. You will understand something of how ignorant he was, when I tell you that as she mentioned God's name, he said: "Who is he? Is he the guy that puts up the money?" The boy was a heathen. But she went on patiently with a lesson which she knew he needed to learn, and she said: "When you find yourself losing your temper and getting angry"—it was that temper which had brought him into trouble—"go into your room and shut the door and pray God to give you strength to resist." One day she heard loud and angry voices on her lawn. Then this little fellow rushed past her into the house, and went into his room. She listened to what he was saying. This is what she heard: "O God, help me to control my temper. Help me not to get angry." Soon the door opened, and the lad came out. As he walked past her, he said, "It works!"

Sentence Sermons. "We begin to be bad as soon as we plume ourselves on being good."

Pray as if all depended on your prayer, and act as if all depended on your action.—St. Ignatius of Loyola.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where was Jericho? 2. What parable has its scene laid on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho? 3. What was a chief publican? 4. How were publicans regarded? 5. How did publicans exact wrongfully from others? 6. What did John the Baptist tell the publicans who came to him, to do? 7. What do you think made Zacchæus eager to see Jesus? 8. What made him eager to make restitution?

LESSON V—MAY 3

JESUS IN THE HOME OF ZACCHÆUS

GOLDEN TEXT: The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost. Luke 19.10

LESSON Luke 19.1-10 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 103.1-10

LUKE 19.1 And he entered and was passing through Jericho. 2 And behold, a man called by name Zacchæus; and he was a chief publican, and he was rich. 3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the crowd, because he was little of stature. 4 And he ran on before, and climbed up into a sycomore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. 5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and said unto him, Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house. 6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. 7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner. 8 And Zacchæus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold. 9 And Jesus said unto him, Today is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Call of Zacchæus, verses 1-6. It was on his way to Jerusalem that Jesus met Zacchæus, the chief publican—a commissioner of taxes, or internal revenue officer, we might call him. This office of chief publican was usually held by a Roman, only the lower offices of publicans being given to Jews. Zacchæus must have been a shrewd and unprincipled man to have gained this office. Love of gain had made him a publican, and as chief publican he had amassed a fortune at the expense of his brethren. Dr. Moffatt suggests that if you could conceive of a Belgian taking service under the German government during the occupation of Belgium, and raising taxes from his fellow-countrymen for the German Government, you might have some idea of the position of a man like Zacchæus in Jericho. Men reviled him, hurled contemptuous epithets at him; he was used to this, and doubtless comforted himself with thoughts of his wealth.

Zacchæus learned that Jesus was to pass through his town of Jericho, and made up his mind that he would see him, despite his handicap of small stature. Perhaps he had heard of Jesus as the friend of publicans and sinners, and no doubt the news had spread of how Jesus had restored the sight of blind Bartimæus just outside Jericho. In a crowd of people a short man has little chance of seeing what is going on, and Zacchæus was so unpopular that of course no one would make way for him.

"There is danger that we may unconsciously block the line of sight of Christ for other men. There is a new feature in our weather reports: they speak of visibility as being good or not very good, or poor. It comes from the new method of air transit, and we all know what it means—the difference between crystalline light and murk and mists. Let us beware lest we spoil the visibility of Christ for our fellow-men.

"There is such a thing as not being able to see Christ because of some mist or doctrine, or through the imperfections of the professed Christian character. At some time or other these have drifted in like channel haze, and obliterated the vision of Christ."

Zacchæus was determined and he was resourceful. He ran on ahead of the crowd and climbed up into a sycomore tree—a "fig-mulberry" with a leaf like the mulberry tree, and a very easy tree to climb, for it has low, horizontal branches. From this point of vantage he could not fail to see the Great Prophet when he passed below him.

"Tennyson describes a self-made man as one

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breasts the blows of circumstance,
And grapples with his evil star.

This is the kind of man I see in Zacchæus, the man who made the Sycomore tree his 'Grand Stand' from which to get a view of Jesus.

"If these words are read by some one who is suffering by some 'birth's invidious bar'; if you are inclined to gird at God for allowing you to be hedged in so cruelly by some hereditary deficiency; if temperamental defects, or hereditary taints, or a narrow environment make it hard for you to get above the crowd, think of Zacchæus. He refused to be beaten by circumstances. He got above the crowd, and so may you. Every life has its Sycomore, and he whose faith finds its way to that will not only see God and Life there, but see them in a light so bright and a panorama so extended as would have been impossible to him had he remained where he was before, unstimulated by misfortune" (W. Mackintosh Mackay).

"Zacchæus!" Jesus called up to the social outcast. Dr. Alexander Maclaren has pointed out that there is always an emphasis of love or warning or authority in Jesus' use of men's names. Here the emphasis is both of love and of authority. "Make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house," Jesus called, much to the surprise of Zacchæus and of every one else. Jesus treated him as a man to be held in honor.

> "There were two Zacchæuses, the actual and the potential Zacchæus. Jesus treated him like a man, and the potential man in Zacchæus answered back. In his dealings with Zacchæus we see the extraordinary value of the encouraging word and the hope-inspiring attitude when their voltage is high enough to get fine results" (J. Macleod).

"The Master came and said, 'Come on down, Zacchæus; I want to dine with you today.' Now, there is more to this dining business than appears upon the surface. It presents an opportunity. The first miracle that Jesus performed was at a marriage feast. The disciples said of the multitude, 'Send them away.' The Master said, 'No; don't send them away. Give ye them to eat.' Jesus and his disciples came to the well at Sychar. While there he met the woman of Samaria, and the result was a work of grace. And that was another eating and drinking occasion. Go into Wesley Rescue Hall upon the Bowery, New York City, of an evening and you will see a cup under each chair. The coffee and rolls are passed and then the men are in condition to listen to the spiritual message. To sit down alongside of a man with an appetite not only presents an opportunity, but is a recognition of one side of man's nature—the social side" (A. W. MacDougald).

II. The Interview of Jesus and Zacchæus, and its Results, verses 6-10. No wonder Zacchæus made haste to come down and receive Jesus joyfully. "Probably no one outside his own class had ever held out his hand to Zacchæus in all his business life, and the kindness was as sweet as it was strange."

> "There are men today who are oppressed, sad and weary, who have within them deep longings for better things, whose desire it is to live useful and noble lives, but because of their social position are ignored, at any rate, are no more than acknowledged. Such are those who need friends—true, real friends; and that is what we ought to be, and what we must show ourselves to be, if we are to imitate our Master's way of drawing men to the Kingdom."

Whether Zacchæus or the crowd was the more surprised, it would be hard to say. Jesus' sneering foes were scandalized as they realized that he was about to accept the publican's hospitality. "He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner!" they cried.

The conversation which took place between Jesus and the publican is not recorded, but the wonderful procedure on the part of Jesus touched the heart of Zacchæus and changed his life. If Jesus thought him worthy he would make himself worthy. He became a new man with a new purpose. He committed himself completely to Jesus and his way of life. "Here and now, Master," he said (in Weymouth's translation), "I give half my property to the poor; and if I have unjustly exacted money from any man, I pledge myself to repay him four times the amount."

His words are virtually a confession of guilt. He wanted to make matters right at once. His was a very practical repentance. "Fifty per cent of his property given outright; the balance used to make restitution at the rate of four hundred per cent—how much was left? Here the camel passed through the needle's eye, and Jesus stood and cheered" (Walter Rauschenbusch).

"Today is salvation come to this house," said Jesus to Zacchæus, and then, seemingly turning to the others present, he added, "forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham"—a son of Abraham by birth, and now worthy to be called a true son of the great Hebrew father. "Christ met him in the spirit of sympathy and yet in the spirit of justice. He discovered the just man in him, but never, not for a moment, condoned the unjust man. He did not declare pardon for the wrongs done to the poor men of Jericho. He awakened his sense of justice through personal sympathy, and the publican offered to make restitution. Then, when he was willing to do justice to right the great wrongs of the past, Jesus said, 'Salvation is come to this house.'"

Very beautifully does Archbishop Trench say, "Each had found what he was looking for—the Savior and sinner. The Shepherd had found his sheep, and the sheep its Shepherd."

> "When Jesus declared that he had come to lay down his life a ransom for many, and in order that every one might understand in what sense he ransomed men from their sins, took the salvation of Zacchæus as an illustration, one understands the atonement" (John Watson).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

He was a chief publican, verse 2. For the way in which publicans were detested, recall our lessons. At the head of the collecting of taxes was the farmer-general, who was a Roman knight, to whom were assigned the whole taxes of a province for a certain number of years, usually five, as Edward Stapfer explains. Under him were the "publicani majores," the chief publicans, among whom were Zacchæus, and under their orders were the "publicani minores," the publicans so-called.

Today I must abide at thy house, verse 5. There were no hotels in Jericho, and it was customary for strangers to be entertained by the people. "Hospitality may almost be called a sacred rite in all parts of the East; and were it not so, what would become of pilgrims?"

If I have wrongfully exacted ought of any man, verse 8. Of course, the joint-stock company of Publicani at Rome expected its handsome dividends; so did the tax-gatherers in the provinces, and those to whom they on occasions sublet the imposts. All wanted to make money from the poor people; and the cost of the collection had to be added to the taxation. Nothing was more common than for the publican to put a fictitious value on property or income. Another favorite trick of theirs was to advance the tax to those who were unable to pay, and then to charge usurious interest on what had thereby become a public debt.—Dr. Edersheim, in Sketches of Jewish Social Life.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

"The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." These words of Jesus reveal his thoughts as he journeyed toward Jerusalem to offer himself a willing sacrifice for the lost. Near Jericho he stopped to save a wretched man, Bartimæus, in his blindness and poverty, and then Zacchæus, in his loneliness and wealth. As far as we know, Zacchæus was the last convert of Jesus before his crucifixion.

Today there are only a few wretched huts at Jericho, and the place is desolate and dreary. In Christ's time, however, it was known as the City of Palms, and was famous for its wonderfully fertile groves and gardens. It was the first city to which merchants came from the East, and its customs were important.

Between this city and Jerusalem is laid the scene of the parable of the Good Samaritan.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

How clearly this incident shows Jesus' method of gaining his followers one by one! How natural and spontaneous were his contacts with individual men and women! "Jesus saw in every individual a child of God, and then, in a spirit of love and contagious optimism, led him away from the bogs and pitfalls into the way of life. There were no questionnaires, no cards to sign, no useless probing into past mistakes and sins, but there was love—infinite, compassionate, restoring love."

Can we not learn the way of Jesus? Can we not visualize beneath the surface of human nature that inner self which is the real man or woman, boy or girl, and find that inner self longing to know the way of Christ and walk in it? Like Zacchæus, they will readily respond to a genuine interest in their spiritual welfare.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

REPENTANCE AND RESTITUTION

Beginning the Lesson. The incident which is our theme today is a very familiar one. We studied it less than six months ago and do not need to spend much time upon it as a story.

Professor Moffatt says that there are always people like Zacchæus. What do you think he means by this? We will let him explain:—

"Some men and women appear to be under a handicap in religion. They have not the same chance that others have of coming into contact with Jesus Christ. Some people are born in families where religion is either ignored or misrepresented. Or what to others presents very little difficulty, is to them a real perplexity, and they say, 'We have not the kind of spiritual intuition, we have not the religious temperament that you seem to have.' If I am speaking to any who are conscious, in one way or another, of a defect in life, or of some handicap, remember Zacchæus is the ancestor of your tribe. There are always people like Zacchæus, and always they are met by Jesus. Those of you who, perhaps, feel that you have not the same time for religion, nor the same leisure or opportunity as others have, may be encouraged by this, that, if you do your best, Christ will do the rest. Put yourself out of your way to get into touch with God, and God will understand and meet you."

"Today I Must Abide at Thy House." Zacchæus was now the host, and Christ the Guest. Thinking of that, I ask myself, "If he should send me a message that he will visit my house today, how would I reply?" Would I say, "I pray thee have me excused"? Would I say, "Lord, I am too busy today; when I have a more convenient season, I will send for thee"? Or would I welcome his coming with great delight, and "receive him joyfully," as Zacchæus did? Would I say, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but if thou comest I will gladly open wide the door, that thou mayest sup with me, and I with thee"?

Yet let me think again. That visit of Jesus to the house of Zacchæus was to be one of gracious love; but what if he proposes to come to mine on a visit of inspection only, to see what my life really is when I think myself alone? If, without announcing a visit beforehand, he should stand in my house as suddenly and as mysteriously as he stood in the upper room among the disciples when the doors were shut, how would I feel? Would I be covered with shame as I saw his eye noting things that never made me ashamed before? What would he think of the lavish self-indulgence shown in the arrangements of my home as contrasted with my niggardly givings to his service and his cause?

Then let me remember that he is paying me such a visit every day. Unseen, he is scrutinizing my life every hour. And if it is a great question, "What do I think of Christ?" it is a far greater one, "What does Christ think of me?"—Condensed from Abiding Help for Changing Days, by G. H. Knight.

Jesus Came to Seek and to Save the Lost. Who are the lost? Among the lost are those who are steeped in vice, having gone far into sin and sunk deep in moral degradation. They are obviously lost, and they know it. But there are many others who are not so obviously lost. Yet they are lost all the same. Is not a man lost when he is out of vital touch with his proper surroundings,

when he is in some way adrift, without aim, without a real grip on things? To be out of fellowship with the Father, to be out of living touch with God in Christ, is to be lost. Some of the lost are those who are least aware of their condition. The Pharisees were highly respectable, of good social standing, and after their manner religious, yet they were lost. They were out of touch with the things that are really indispensable to true life.

It is as being in this pathetic plight that Jesus the Rescuer regards men and women. It is a condition that is full of peril. Anything may happen to a man thus lost. But Jesus has great faith in the recoverability of man; and because of that he goes out "to seek and to save."—A. Woodward Brown.

Repentance and Restitution. In this narrative we have the portraiture of a man in the act of entering into Christian life. His heart was touched by Jesus' wondrous kindness to him. Over against his life he had seen the life of his Master. As by a flash of lightning his way of life stood revealed to him in all its baseness. His whole nature was stirred. He would right about face and make a complete change in his life. "Behold, Lord," he exclaimed in penitence, "the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold." He was penitent, and he would make restitution as far as lay in his power. That was the first step toward righteousness, and Jesus declared him now a Christian: "This day is salvation come to thy house."

Zacchæus began his Christian life by attacking the first glaring sin of which he was conscious. There should be no more greed and fraud and dishonesty and cruelty in his business. Those besetting sins should be stopped. So it must be with all true repentance. The necessary step is to do some right thing, the first which one's conscience points out to one.

A former saloon-keeper in Brazil, Indiana, went into the grocery business. One day a poor neighbor came with his troubles and said: "I'm pretty hard up right now and need some groceries. Will you stand me off?"

"You bet your life," the grocer answered. "Get what you want. I got a whole lot of your money that wasn't coming to me when I was in the saloon business. I owe you something."

How to Make Restitution. A missionary was teaching a class of Filipinos the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," and the question of gambling was discussed. The story was told of a conscientious old man who joined the church, and then became convinced that in his younger days when a prosperous gambler he had robbed many helpless women and children by gambling with their fathers and husbands. But the gambling was done in distant places and among strangers, so he had no way of restoring to them what he had unlawfully won. So, as restitution, he built a "prophet's chamber" in his home where he could entertain the itinerant missionary, furnished part of the money to erect a much needed church, installed a new lighting plant in the church, and in many other ways proved himself a faithful follower of his Master.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. Grafters of today.

2. Who are the lost? How may they be won for Christ?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why was this parable spoken? 2. How did the parable show the people the error of their supposition, verse 11? 3. Was it just that the third servant should be deprived of his pound? 4. What is the meaning of the servant's words in verse 21? 5. How does the third servant show that he was himself a cruel man? 6. What differences between the parables of the Talents and of the Pounds? 7. Why is it incorrect to speak of "a talent hid in a napkin"? 8. Give instances of the working of the law stated in verse 26.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

BEGINNING A NEW LIFE

Beginning the Lesson. It is a well-known story that is ours today. Let us see through Dr. Edersheim's eyes the procession as it passes through Jericho:—

It was the custom, when a festive band passed through a place, for the inhabitants to gather in the streets to bid their brethren welcome. And on that

afternoon surely, there was scarcely any one in Jericho who would not go forth to see this pilgrim-band. Men, curious, angry, half convinced; women, holding up their babes, it may be, for a passing blessing, or pushing forward their children that in after years they might say they had seen the Prophet of Nazareth; traders, soldiers—a solid wall of onlookers before their gardens was this crowd along the road by which Jesus was to pass. Now the band is approaching, through that double living wall: first, the Savior, viewing that crowd, with, ah! how different thoughts from theirs—surrounded by his apostles, the face of each expressive of such feeling as was uppermost; conspicuous among them, he who carried the bag, with festive, uncertain, wild glance here and there, as one who seeks to gather himself up to a terrible deed. Behind them are the disciples, men and women, who are going up with him to the feast. Of all persons in that crowd the least noted, the most hindered in coming—and yet the most concerned, was the Chief Publican. Only one thought filled the whole being of Zacchæus. Those wondrous eyes were upturned and that face of infinite grace, never to be forgotten, beamed upon him in the overhanging branches of that sycomore the welcome of recognition, and he uttered the self-spoken invitation in which the Invited was the real Inviter, the Guest the true Host.

A Sycomore Tree

What Others Saw in Zacchæus and What Jesus Saw. Others saw the publican—the coarse and common publican. What had he to do with good thoughts and holy longings? By his very position and calling he was shut away from everything but contempt and hatred. The only comfort was that he had got so used to it. He passed along the street, and he was shunned as if he were a leper. The Pharisee gathered his robes around him with a scowl, and shrank from the contact that would defile him. Their hatred showed itself as their eyes flashed and they spat upon the ground and hissed out, "Dog." The door was shut against him—they would not suffer him in their presence, much less in their houses; and in their religious assemblies there was none whose coming was more resented than that of Zacchæus. "What," said they, "could a fellow like that think about, except how he could extort a greater gain for himself out of the people? He is incapable of any lofty desire or purpose."

But within him there was another man altogether: there was a world of holy thought and generous longing, if only you could have got at it, or if only Zacchæus could have brought it out. I see him sitting quietly and thinking. He sighs: "I do wish I could do some good in the world; but it is hard when everybody expects that you are going to cheat him, and everybody has a bad word for you. Why, if they only knew me and gave me the chance, I am sure I would deal honestly with every man and be generous to the poor. But how can I when they treat me as they do?" Poor Zacchæus! There are thousands today in his place. It is the doubt, the scorn of other people that make it so hard to be good. The Herods who with cruel contempt and breath of bitterness do slay the better life within men. There are hosts of men and women about who could be good if only somebody would believe in them. A whisper of faith in them would save them. How much good there is in people if we could only find it!

But now let us see what Jesus sees. His eye passes over the sea of faces until they rest on this man. Is there not in Jesus Christ a swift, instinctive response to the longing heart, to the soul that cherishes good purposes? The Master looks and sees it all—the love that lies beneath, the longings unfulfilled, the sorrow that seems to look out as if from prison bars. Then Jesus stands and looks up at him—"Zacchæus!"

All the crowd is hushed, eagerly listening. What is he going to say? Is he going to hurl at him such words of stern condemnation as those which he cast at the Pharisees? "Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house." Think of Zacchæus now! "What, does this great Prophet call me by name?—me!—and I thought I was outside the religious people altogether. Does he single me out in the eyes of all this crowd, that he may be my Guest,—and I thought there was no chance for me! Now indeed I can do everything that I have dreamed, and be all that I have desired. Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wronged any man I restore him fourfold." All the better self leaps forth, full grown and triumphant.

This is the glory of Jesus Christ. This is the gospel. By kindly recognition of the good within us he transforms us. This is the Savior to whom we may come—nay, rather, who comes to us that he may fulfill the longings of our better self, the dreams of our better moments; and to abide with us evermore, our strength and our salvation.—Mark Guy Pearse.

Beginning a New Life. I knew a man in my ministry by the name of Beck, relates a minister. When awakened by the Holy Spirit at a camp meeting near his residence, he said to himself, as I heard him repeat afterwards: "I am a rebel against God. I ought to abandon sin, and return to God and be saved. I am a distiller. All I am worth I have put into my new distillery. I can't be a distiller and be a Christian. If I give up my distillery I will become bankrupt and beggar my family. If I hold on to it, and go on destroying my neighbors with whiskey, I will lose my soul. I don't want to beggar my family, but I can't afford to destroy myself. I must have salvation at any cost."

So he came and knelt down as a seeker, and began at once, with the greatest simplicity, to state his case in prayer to God, about as follows: "Lord, you know me. You know what a wicked sinner I am, and what a mean business I am in. All I'm worth is in that still-house which I have just opened. It hasn't done much harm yet, and I have had no money out of it. Lord, I can't afford to lose my soul, so if you will have mercy on me and save me tonight, and trust me till morning I will drag the still out of the house, and put it where it will never be used for distilling liquor. I would do it tonight, but I cannot, and I cannot risk my soul unsaved till morning. You have said, 'Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.' I surrender myself, soul and body to thee now, and receive and trust Jesus Christ to save me now."

It was a straight transaction, and God saved him that night. Next morning before breakfast, he moved the still and had it laid beside his dwelling, and there it lay when I saw it a couple of years afterwards. He would not sell it to be used by any one for distilling alcoholic drinks.

He said that God had converted him on credit, and he meant to carry out his part of the agreement to the end. Yet he did not beggar his family. He converted his still-house into a grist-mill, and made a fair support.—Told by Louis Albert Banks.

Who Does the Finding? Yam Sing came from China to California, and was brought to know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. When examined before baptism concerning his experience and faith, some one asked him how he found Jesus. "I no find Jesus at all; he find me," was the answer of the converted man, an answer which was more than satisfactory to the questioner, and which showed that he had learned something of the love of him who came to "seek and to save that which was lost."—The Sunday School Advocate.

Sentence Sermons.

Ere God forgive the guilt,
Make man some restitution.—Browning.

He who feels that he is not what he ought to be, is already on the high road to amendment.—George Ebers.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the meaning of the word "ambassage"? 2. What was the value of the pound? (Margin of your Bible.) 3. What do you think of the excuse of the man who hid his pound in a napkin? 4. Where is the parable of the Talents found? 5. How does it differ from the parable of the Pounds? 6. In our parable, what is it that Christ commends? 7. Give instances where fidelity has counted for more than ability. 8. Give instances where fidelity has been coupled with ability.

LESSON VI—MAY 10

THE PARABLE OF THE POUNDS

GOLDEN TEXT: It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. 1 Corinthians 4.2

LESSON Luke 19.11-26 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 103.11-18

LUKE 19.11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and "because" they supposed that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear. 12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. 13 And he called ten servants of his, and gave them ten pounds, and said unto them, Trade ye "herewith" till I come. 14 But his citizens hated him, and sent an ambassage after him, saying, We will not that this man reign over us. 15 And it came to pass, when he was come back again, having received the kingdom, that he commanded these servants, unto whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by trading. 16 And the first came before him, saying, Lord, thy pound hath made ten pounds more. 17 And he said unto him, Well done, thou good servant: because thou wast found faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. 18 And the second came, saying, Thy pound, Lord, hath made five pounds. 19 And he said unto him also, Be thou also over five cities. 20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, "here is" thy pound, which I kept laid up in a napkin: 21 for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that which thou layedst not down, and reapest that which thou didst not sow. 22 He saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I am an austere man, taking up that which I laid not down, and reaping that which I did not sow; 23 then wherefore gavest thou not my money into the bank, and I at my coming should have required it with interest? 24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take away from him the pound, and give it unto him that hath the ten pounds. 25 And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds. 26 I say unto you, that unto every one that hath shall be given; but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Reason for Giving the Parable, verse 11. Jesus and his disciples were approaching Jerusalem, and many were expecting that his entry into the city would be an inauguration of the Messianic Kingdom. Jesus knew that he was going to a far country, but they supposed that the kingdom was immediately to appear. They looked for it to appear suddenly from the outside instead of gradually from within. "They focussed their attention on the fact that they were about to enter into a reward, while Jesus put the emphasis on the fact that they were about to enter into a trust." Jesus gave this parable to warn those who wished him to head a revolution and establish his kingdom by force that it would come only by patient faithfulness.

II. The Parable of the Pounds, verses 12-26. Jesus begins his parable with the statement that a certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. Calling ten servants, he gave each a pound and bade them trade therewith till he returned. A mina, translated a pound, is equal to one hundred drachmas: a drachma was a coin worth about eight pence, or sixteen cents, RVm. The sum was small, about sixteen dollars, but it would test their faithfulness. In the similar parable of the talents different sums were entrusted to three men.

To these servants Jesus said, "Trade ye herewith till I come." Wycliffe's Version reads "Merchandize till I come." The word "occupy" in the King James' Version at the time the translation was made had the meaning of "use."

But his citizens hated him and sent an ambassage after him (Archelaus' attempt, page 177, was opposed by an ambassage of fifty representing the Jewish nation), saying contemptuously, "We will not that this man reign over us." "It is a real misfortune that those insignificant pounds should have given their name to this great parable, to the almost entire neglect of that more tremendous side of it, which has no place in the title at all and has come to be regarded almost as a clumsy interpolation. For if the first fact to

which Calvary testifies is the redeeming love of God for us, the second is his rejection by his own people" (J. G. Simpson).

On his return to judge the world (in the interpretation of the parable the nobleman is Jesus himself), he calls for a settlement with his servants, to learn how faithful they have been to their trust. The case of three, two faithful and one unfaithful, is taken as typical of all. The first had gained ten pounds more, and is rewarded by being given authority over ten cities. The second had gained five pounds, and is placed over five cities. The third had done nothing.

"Life is God's sacramental gift
To man for his emprising,—
The talent given into his care
For his soul's exercising,—
A sacred trust bestowed on him
For his immortalizing,
And he who lends will one day ask
His own again with interest;
See to it then, lest thou be found
Of those who failed him in the test" (John Oxenham).

"Lord, here is thy pound," the third one said, "which I kept laid up in a napkin," and then he excused himself by accusing his lord of being an austere man who would require him to make up whatever loss there might be and would keep whatever profit he might make, so that he himself would be no better off for all his labor or trouble. "Thou takest up that which thou layest not down and reapest that which thou didst not sow": these were probably proverbial sayings applied to grasping persons.

"This is the excuse of the wicked and slothful servant for neglect. Wicked and therefore hard. The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. Even at their most merciful point they are hard. And being hard himself he thinks his lord is also hard. He measures his lord's corn by his own bushel. In a hard heart God's reflection is hard. David saw that ages ago, for he exclaimed, "With the froward thou wilt show thyself as froward." God is only reflected in man's heart, and the nature of the heart determines what the reflection will be like. Look in a concave mirror and your face will be magnified to that of a giant. Look in a convex mirror and your face will be minimized to that of a dwarf. Our vision of God is determined by the heart which beholds.

"The same principle holds good not only of individuals but of communities. The idea of God which prevails in an age is largely determined by the spirit of such an age. This, to a very large extent, accounts for the various theologies which have prevailed in different epochs of the Church. The age of Augustine was one largely influenced by the legal notions which dominated, and God was regarded as the King of men. In our own history, when a hard and exacting spirit prevailed so that people were hanged for crimes like shoplifting, or sheep-stealing, men thought that God rules in the same exacting way, punishing to the uttermost for the smallest offences, meting out a suffering that was eternal for sins that were often wrought from want of thought. I once heard a man tell a boy who, out of sheer excess of physical energy which would not allow him to be still, was leaping over a gate on a Sunday, that God would send him to hell for Sabbath-breaking. What kind of God could such a man have in his mind!" (W. Garrett Horder).

If I am such a man as you describe, said the Lord, then there was all the more reason for your greater diligence in my service: why did you not put the money in the bank that you might have returned it to me with interest? Then he commanded his officers to take the pound from that man and give it to the one that had ten pounds. The surprised bystanders objected, saying, "But he hath ten pounds!" "I say unto you," Jesus solemnly returned, "that every one that hath shall be given [here is the law of increasing returns], but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him" [and here, the law of diminishing returns]: The more a faculty is used, the more it is capable of use; but a faculty unused is lost.

This is a law which holds good in all realms, physical, mental and spiritual, the arm that is not used shrivels and shrinks and becomes strengthless, the mind that is not exercised loses the power to study, the capacity for spiritual things atrophies from disuse.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

And he called ten servants of his, and gave them ten pounds, verse 13. The story is true of the Oriental life of the period; for, when a wealthy man was leaving his home for a while, two courses were open to him for the arrangement of his affairs: either he might make his confidential slaves his agents, committing to them the tilling of his land, and giving to them his money to be used by them in trade; or he might take advantage of the money-changing system which had been introduced by the Phœnicians and which was at the time in full operation throughout the Roman Empire.—Wm. M. Taylor, in Parables.

Trade ye herewith till I come, verse 13. The Jews have always been a trading people. They had in the first century the same genius for commerce as now. This is obvious from the prominent place which Jesus gives in his parables to the bank, the talents, the stewards, the questions of interest, capital, and revenue. He made use of such comparisons because he knew how familiar they were to his hearers, and the fathers have handed down to us a saying of his which is not in the Gospels, but which belongs to the same order of thought: "Be good bankers," he is reported to have said.—Edmond Stapfer.

Have thou authority over ten cities, verse 17. According to Eastern custom, special cities were appointed to furnish supplies for the service of the state: cities of store for chariots, for horsemen, for building purposes, for provision for the royal table. Special governors for these and their surrounding districts were appointed by David and Solomon (1 Kg. 4.7; 9.19; 1 Ch. 27.25; 2 Ch. 17.12; 21.3). To this practice our Lord alludes in his parable of the Pounds, and it agrees with the theory of Hindu government, which was to be conducted by lords of single townships, of ten, one hundred, or a thousand towns.—Biblical Cyclopedia.

Wherefore gavest thou not my money into the bank and I at my coming should have required it with interest? verse 23. The word "bank" comes from the bank or bench on which the money-changers placed their money. The bankers, while usually money-changers also, carried on more extended transactions, borrowing and lending money, placing money at interest for its owners, and collecting debts. Tel-el-Amarna tablets contain records of banking transactions which took place as early as 1400 B.C. The rate of interest varied from four to forty per cent. The Old English word "usury," from the Latin "usura," signified at first merely the sum paid for the use of money, but it gradually became a "fallen word," signifying exorbitant interest. Usury is one of the great evils in the East today.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The parable of the Talents, which Matthew records in 25.14-30, is often confounded with this parable of the Pounds; the two are similar, but there are numerous differences. In The Parabolic Teaching of Christ, Dr. A. B. Bruce thus distinguishes the lesson which Jesus designed each to teach: "The parable of the Pounds illustrates the proposition that when ability is equal, quantity [of work] determines relative merit. The parable of the Talents, on the other hand, illustrates the proposition that when ability varies, then not absolute quantity of work done but the ratio of the quantity to the ability, ought to determine value."

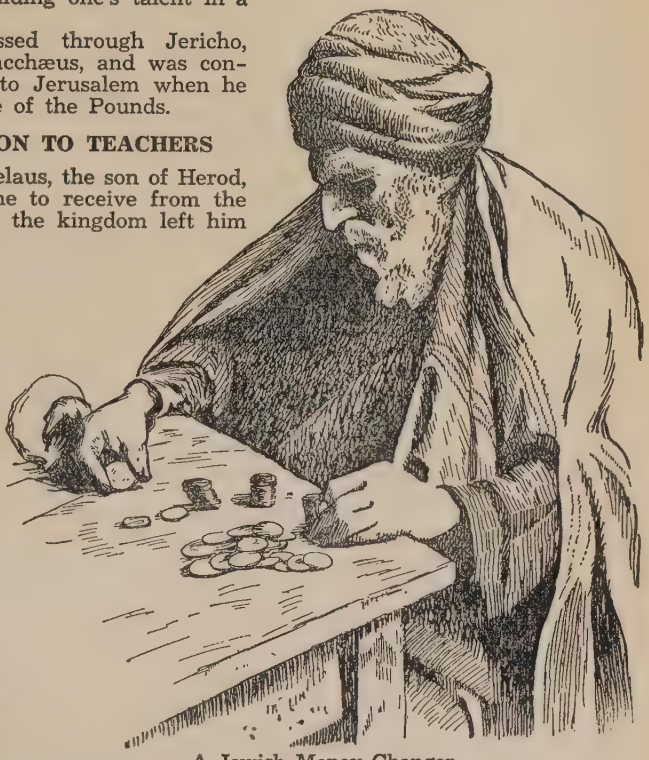
"Both teach," in the words of James Freeman Clarke, "that it is not enough to render back to our Master what we have received, unimpaired and uninjured; but we must bring back more than we receive—that is, that we must add something, by our own industry and fidelity, to what God intrusts to us; that we are his stewards.

"The parable of the Talents teaches the law of responsibility, that of the Pounds, the law of retribution. The first shows that the more we receive,

the more we are bound to do; those who have two talents must bring two more; those who have five, five more. The other shows that the more we gain, the more we shall receive; that progress is not according to arithmetical but geometrical progression; that it is a constantly accelerated progress."

Note that it is the pound which is hid in a napkin, not the talent in the parable of the Talents, which was buried in the earth: one so often hears the expression "hiding one's talent in a napkin."

Jesus had passed through Jericho, where he met Zacchæus, and was continuing his way to Jerusalem when he spoke the parable of the Pounds.



A Jewish Money-Changer

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

In 4 B.C., Archelaus, the son of Herod, had gone to Rome to receive from the Emperor Tiberius the kingdom left him by his father's will. The Jews claimed that Archelaus was cruel, and they sent a delegation of fifty men to Rome to oppose his appointment. Tiberius settled the matter by granting to Archelaus only half of the kingdom, and bestowing upon him the title of Ethnarch rather than of Governor. Archelaus had left his affairs in the hands of officials, and on his return he had some of his enemies put to death. It is quite probable that Jesus was forcibly reminded of this incident while in Jericho, where there were several beautiful buildings which Archelaus had erected, and on his journey up to Jerusalem he immediately based upon it his parable of the Pounds. His hearers would recognize the allusion, and would be all the more interested therefore in the parable. In this the Master Teacher has given a useful hint to all teachers. The incidents of the day, the events of history, will often forcibly illustrate the truth you are teaching. Are you wisely using them?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

STEWARDSHIP OF MONEY

Beginning the Lesson. "A great fortune is a splendid servitude," wrote Seneca, the millionaire of the first century. Carnegie in the twentieth century said of rich men, "At first they own the money they have made and saved. Later in life the money owns them." We have studied a parable of a man who was owned by his possessions. What were its lessons? Today we have another parable which teaches the lesson of the stewardship of money.

We Are Partners with God. Stewardship is not optional or incidental; it is essential, vital, fundamental to any rational consecration of life. It takes

hold on the very roots of human affection, underlies the substratum of Christian character, flows out into every channel of holy endeavor. And it is as practical and adaptable as it is broad. It fits in with the rough-and-tumble of everyday life. "Am I a steward of God, answerable to him alone?" Then I know exactly what to do, or, at least, how to put my soul in the way of quickly finding out.

Neither is stewardship a cold, vague, impersonal ideal. It is a living reality, most desirable and attractive. It turns duty into privilege, yearning into fulfilment, and burdens into achievements. It is not a must; it is a may. It is a radiant opportunity.

"Here am I in a sordid, prosaic, unreliable, and disappointing world; but I am a steward of God, a high-grade representative of his interests, an ambassador extraordinary, under certain limitations, to be sure, yet given large discretion and initiative, trusted by the All Wise to help him in putting over his vast designs among men. What a chance! And how I like my job!"

Here, then, is Christian stewardship, so good that the best Christian in the world cannot get along without it; "for Christ also pleased not himself" but became its noblest illustration; fine enough for the finest gentleman; winsome enough for the noblest lady; big enough for the biggest business man; promising enough for the most ambitious youth; yet so simple and natural that the wayfaring man, whatever his intellectual deficiencies, need not err therein.—Luther E. Lovejoy.

Robbing God. How does God look upon these easy, comfortable, and rather selfish lives that we live in these days? How does he look upon this creeping materialism that gets hold upon the very best of us, and makes us feel that life consists of the abundance of the things that we possess—makes us feel that the object of our existence here is to be comfortable and to keep clear of trouble and disgrace, and just go on a nice smooth pathway till the end comes? Is that what God intends? The man who realizes that his wealth, for instance, his possessions, his talents are God's gift, and given to be used, and who keeps these things for himself, and to build up his own comfort and his own ease, and just gives a little here and there—that man is coming under the prophet's condemnation of robbing God. The man who does the minimum of requirements under his Christian faith—that man, however respectable his behavior, has to be accounted and judged, not in man's sight or by men, but in God's sight and by God, a miserable sinner.—Selère.

The Revelation. John Hull found the telegram at his office. As he read the words, the busy scene about him faded away and he saw himself once more a little, ragged, frightened boy, who heard with terror the word "Poorhouse" whispered by the neighbors. Then Aunt Rachel had come in. She had stood a moment looking at his mother's still face; then she had crossed the room and gathered the boy into her arms. "He isn't going to the poorhouse," she said, quietly. "I am going to take care of him."

It was an odd "care-taking" in some ways. Aunt Rachel was an old maid, and knew nothing of a boy's heart. And yet—how good she had been—how good and patient! In the last ten years, although he had seen her only twice, there had been no word of reproach, only the same unchanging love and faith. A blur came over John Hull's eyes, and calling his secretary, he gave rapid orders. He was going to Aunt Rachel. He hoped she would know.

Nine hours later he was alone with Aunt Rachel. As he looked at the great peace of the small, worn face, a strange feeling swept across him. He never saw a look like that in Wall Street! This little, plain, old countrywoman had possessed something greater than riches!

Later, they brought him her papers and letters. They were very few, but among them were her account-books, and John Hull realized that in those careful figures he was reading the story of her life. He was amazed to know how tiny her income had been. And of what she had had, a tenth had gone to her church, a fifth to her missionary society, and nearly all the rest for a boy who was not even related to her.

And he had thought her life pitifully poor and narrow! Now in his hour of vision he saw that his was the poor and barren life—with its careless and spasmodic giving, its absorption in "the game." He understood at last the

generous and unselfish investment of this life and all its possessions. And suddenly there came to him the memory of a hot summer Sunday of his boyhood, and of the minister's voice as he read his text: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things."

Could that be said of the uses he had made of his own life? Alone in the April night John Hull faced himself.—The Youth's Companion.

It Is Required in Stewards that a Man Be Found Faithful. Every sensitive reader of "David Copperfield" is inclined to be impatient when the "lone, lorn cre'tur," Mrs. Gummidge, appears on the scene. For years she has enjoyed the hospitality of the humble home at Yarmouth, but she contributes nothing to make that home cheerful. She complains that she is not "wanted," and is so constantly unreasonable that we wonder why she should expect to be "wanted" anywhere.

Then comes the sudden flight of "little Em'ly," and the dazed grief of the bereaved family. We hear no more of Mrs. Gummidge's fretful complainings. The heart of kindness that must have been there all the while rouses itself to thoughtful ministries for those round her. That such a forlorn, self-absorbed mortal as Mrs. Gummidge should try to comfort any one seems almost out of the question, but she really has a gift in that direction, and can use it successfully.

The transformation of Mrs. Gummidge is a bit of clever artistry, but the underlying truth belongs to the practical philosophy of life. We all have our buried talents, our unused gifts, our undeveloped resources. Sometimes an unlooked-for emergency brings them to light, but oftener they never see the light at all, and our own lives are the poorer, and other lives are the poorer, because of what lies idle and gains nothing.

The Peggotty home at Yarmouth would have been brighter and more cheerful all those years had Mrs. Gummidge's awakening come earlier. The young girl whose foolish flight was the tragedy of that home, might never have been tempted to leave a happier, more sympathetic household. And all the kindness and love that came out under the pressure of circumstance was there all the time, wrapped up in a napkin like the unused pound of the unfaithful servant.—The Youth's Companion.

If Christian Stewardship Were Practised. Were Christ's great truth of stewardship adequately understood and practised, it would produce the greatest revolution the world has ever seen, the only revolution that can save society. If only all men, or even a majority, conceived themselves not as owners but as stewards of the gifts of nature, of fortune and of grace, think how this would solve all our problems. In the Church, as full as it is of wealth, ability, and culture, what financial demands would not be easily met, what difficulty in obtaining competent persons to carry on the Church's work among the young, the churchless, in the field of home and foreign missions, would not be triumphantly overcome? Such difficulties would not exist. In the State, instead of the office-seeker or the man who has an ax of his own to grind, we should find, far oftener than we do, the most high-minded and competent citizens ready to shoulder the burden of public affairs; those who in other directions have proved their power, showing their will, even at large personal sacrifice, to serve the community. In the world of industry and business, we should find the man of commercial genius and administrative ability regarding himself as an organizer, not as an exploiter of other men's labor, as a true captain of industry, to whom self-enrichment, if it come, will come as a by-product, not as the deliberate and dominating aim of his career.—Robert Law, in The Grand Adventure.

The Tithing Law Needs Love for its Fulfillment. Suppose there is an old persons' home in your community. Could you contribute to its expenses with tithe money? Suppose there is an old person in your family or among your relatives and you take this person into your home to live with you. Would it be permissible to pay part of your grocery bill with your tithe? I am a student. When I finish my education I intend to give my full time to Christian work. Would it be proper for me to pay part of my tuition with tithe money? We give to the Educational Loan Fund, to missions for educa-

tion of children in China, in slum sections of cities, or in the mountain regions of the South, and feel justified in spending part of our tithe for this cause. But how about a man with a large family of children who need to be kept in school? Can money for clothing and books be taken from his tithe?

These questions Fred M. Smith asks in Zion's Herald, and answers them as follows:

"There is no way of answering these questions on legalistic basis. The only solution is to catch something of the spirit of the Master's unselfishness, have such a love for God and your fellow men that you will share your earnings unselfishly with others, whether it is through the medium of the church envelope, the town hospital, the Salvation Army, the aged of your family or of your community, the children of your household or of another household if they are in need. With that spirit you will not be alarmed if a school nurse and sanitary water conditions add another mill to the tax rate. When I am asked if I believe in tithing I always reply that I believe in systematic, unselfish giving in proportion to a person's means. If every person who calls himself Christian should give anything like a tenth of his income, the churches and hospitals and educational institutions would have more money than they could use; missionaries who are returning from lack of funds, broken-hearted, could go back to their work of soul-winning and the Kingdom of God would go forward. But let us not put it on the basis of mathematics but on the basis of love, for love is the fulfilment of the law."

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. If God gives us the possibilities and the power to get wealth, to acquire influence, to be forces in the world, what is the true conception of life but Divine ownership and human administration? —Maltbie D. Babcock.

2. The penalty of disuse. How have you seen this law at work in others? What has been your own experience of this law?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Did the crowd really mean it when they hailed Jesus as King? 2. When were they tested? 3. What characteristics did Jesus show in this event? 4. How did the popular enthusiasm for Jesus hasten his death? 5. Read John's account of the events in the temple following the triumphal entry. (Jn. 12.20-50.) 6. What was the system of temple trading? 7. How may your place of worship be to you a place of traffic?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

PARTNERS WITH JESUS

Beginning the Lesson. Jesus was going to a far country—when, our lessons will soon tell us—and he wished his followers to be faithful workers for him while he was gone. He was on his way from Jericho to Jerusalem for the last time: what great expectations were in the minds of many? To dissipate this, and to teach them that no matter how long he delayed his return they must use the time well, Jesus told them the parable of the Pounds. What is it? What is the interpretation of the parable? Jesus is the nobleman, and the nobleman's journey is symbolic of Jesus' approaching departure through death. The servants are his followers, to whom he entrusts his interests here during his absence. The pounds are capacities—physical, intellectual, spiritual.

Partners with Jesus. God and I are partners in a partnership which includes every phase of life. While I am his partner in the Kingdom task, he is no less my Partner in the business that concerns me every day. This conception of life lifts the most ordinary task out of the monotonous into the joyful.

In true partnership the resources of the parties concerned are pooled. One does not contribute everything and the other nothing. But both give of their resources of personality, time, energy, money, influence and effort. Life itself is put into the true partnership.

Let us remember that the resources of Christ are at our disposal. Christ gives to us his example of unselfish service. He gives to us, his partners, the blessing of his fellowship, of forgiveness, strength, peace of soul, comfort and hope. Into this partnership we must pour our courageous effort, our time and talent, our mental powers, our physical being, as well as wealth.

And God expects us to develop and increase that which he entrusted to us, no matter how small. He expects us to be discontented with a static condition of our talents and resources. We may bring the one pound entrusted to us up to five or even ten. Not only is this hoped for but it is expected of us. Condemnation is pronounced upon the man who failed to increase that which was entrusted to him.

Apparently God doesn't expect us all to develop to the same degree. No word of censure was given the man who had increased his pound to five instead of ten, for he had been faithful. He had developed his pound and it had increased.—Adapted from Stewardship by R. Donald Williamson.

The Man with the Napkin. Really, it is not easy at first to see where his "wickedness" came in. At most one might allow that he made a grave mistake. He supposed that it was better to save what he had than to risk it. He had not grasped the grand idea that God has made nothing to be saved after that manner. God has made everything to be used. Among the countless things which he has created there is not one which was meant to be idle. All are intended to be used and used again and again in his great beneficent plan for the good of all.

It is clear, therefore, that the servant who wraps up or lays by any of God's gifts defrauds him of his "usury"—that is, of the advantage which would have followed from the proper use of his goods. Not to understand that is to make a fatal mistake, but it does not amount to "wickedness."

What makes this man's wickedness? There can be no doubt about it—it was his selfish timidity. He was a coward. He was not only afraid to do his duty—that may be said of everybody at times—but he let his selfish fears govern his life, and always shrank back from undertaking responsibility and risk.

We all have in us something that is akin to the man with the napkin. We are all tempted to save ourselves, to shirk our responsibilities, and to take the most pleasant path. We snatch at any decent excuse in which to cover up our duty out of sight.

The antidote to this natural state of mind is to study and to strive to imitate the life of the Lord Jesus, who "pleased not himself"; who dared all for our sakes; who shrank from no consequences.—Condensed from an Article in Young England, by E. C. Dawson.

Of No Use. A youth was leaving his aunt's house after a visit, when, finding it was beginning to rain, he caught up an umbrella that was snugly placed in a corner, and was proceeding to open it, when the old lady, who for the first time observed his movements, sprang toward him, exclaiming, "No, no; that you never shall. I've had that umbrella twenty-three years, and it has never been wet yet; and I'm sure it shan't be wetted now."

Some folks' talents are treated in just this way. They are none the worse for wear. They are covered up, or hid away to be used in case of emergency, but not for common occasions. We are suspicious that the twenty-three-year-old gingham was gone at the seams, and if it had been unfurled it would have looked like a sieve. At any rate, we are sure that this is the case with the hidden pound which has answered no useful turn in a man's life.—The Watchword.

Sentence Sermons. Great faithfulness in the use of small gifts hath great acceptance and a great and sure reward.—Robert Leighton.

Whatever talents we have, only those count which we use.

Fidelity in the use of what we have is God's supreme test of us.—J. G. K. McClure.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Which of the Gospels contain an account of the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem? (All of them.) 2. On what day of the week was the triumphal entry? 3. What do we call the day and why? 4. Where is the Mount of Olives? 5. Where is Bethany? 6. What two reasons does John give for the presence of the multitude with Jesus? (Jn. 12.12, 17, 18.) 7. How can you show loyalty to your king? 8. How many days intervened between the triumphal entry and the crucifixion? 9. For what purpose were the money-changers in the temple? See Ex. 30.13.

LESSON VII—MAY 17

JESUS ENTERS JERUSALEM AS KING

GOLDEN TEXT: He is Lord of lords, and King of kings. Revelation 17.14.

LESSON Luke 19.28 to 20.47 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 24

LUKE 19.29 And it came to pass, when he drew nigh unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, 30 saying, Go your way into the village over against "you"; in which as ye enter ye shall find a colt tied, whereon no man ever yet sat: loose him, and bring him. 31 And if any one ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say, The Lord hath need of him. 32 And they that were sent went away, and found even as he had said unto them. 33 And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? 34 And they said, The Lord hath need of him. 35 And they brought him to Jesus: and they threw their garments upon the colt, and set Jesus thereon. 36 And as he went, they spread their garments in the way. 37 And as he was now drawing nigh, "even" at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works which they had seen; 38 saying, Blessed "is" the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. 39 And some of the Pharisees from the multitude said unto him, Teacher, rebuke thy disciples. 40 And he answered and said, I tell you that, if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out.

41 And when he drew nigh, he saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

45 And he entered into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold, 46 saying unto them, It is written, And my house shall be a house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of robbers.

47 And he was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people sought to destroy him: 48 and they could not find what they might do; for the people all hung upon him, listening.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. Preparations for Christ's Triumphal Entry, 19.29-35. And when he had thus spoken (this account follows immediately the giving of the Parable of the Pounds) Jesus went before his disciples on their way to Jerusalem. See The Historical Background. "The Jerusalem road is no Appian way lined with the tombs of dead gallantries; it is no macadam road running through the hills and over the moorland to the city or the sea. It is rather the direction of desire, a purpose pursued, a quest adopted and a conquest won. It reveals the Christ of the sacrificial purpose."

The triumphal entry was deliberately planned. It was Jesus' last appeal to the people to accept him as the kind of King he was. He would exhaust the possibilities of the situation, though he could not have expected to turn the people's mind away from the kind of king they wanted—an earthly rather than a spiritual sovereign.

In the neighborhood of Bethany and Bethphage, on the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples to a near-by village to secure for him a colt that had never been ridden they would find tied there. In case the owner objected, they had only to say, "The Lord hath need of him." These words may have been the password which Jesus had arranged with the owner of the colt. From John 12.1 we know that he had stopped for at least a night at Bethany, when he would have had time to make such an arrangement. An ordinary beast of burden would have been unsuitable for a distinguished rider, whereas the ass that had never carried any one met the requirements. It all happened in just that way—the colt was found, the question of the owner and the answer of the disciples were given, and the latter returned to Jesus with the colt.

> "There is a glory in ownership when it is remembered that the thing owned is useful for worthy ends and is readily dedicated thereto."

By choosing an ass to ride upon, Jesus plainly showed the people that he was not to be thought of as a military leader, for the horse was used in warfare, while the ass was the fitting animal for the Prince of Peace. The people

threw garments on the colt for Jesus to sit upon and upon the roadway to make a carpeted passage for him, all to honor Jesus as King, just as in our day Californians have strewn the roadway with flowers to honor a President.

II. The King's Royal Progress, 19.36-38. As they went down the Mount of Olives toward the city, the joyous crowd shouted and praised God for all the mighty works which they had seen, and cried, "Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord." Compare Isa. 62.11; Zech. 9.9; Ps. 118.26.

"Through the singing of a multitude the ear of the musician discerns the distinct note of many a voice; in the great orchestra he distinguishes the part of every instrument. So amid the shouts on Olivet long ago the Lord discerned the secret of many a heart. He knew just how to appraise the plaudits of the crowd. He would not rebuke the ignorant enthusiasm of those long-oppressed and ready to hail a Deliverer. . . .

"He knew also how to read the hearts of the protesting Pharisees—self-blinded to the significance of the scene. He was not deceived as to the welcome that Jerusalem would give its King. But most, we think, he looked into the faces of the group of those closest to him. How would they stand the test—alike of the shouting and of that which should follow?

"For who understood, as Jesus did, that never by the shouting of a multitude can the King come to his Own, but just by the deliberate choosing in the lonely chamber of the single soul?

"It is still easy to shout with the crowd: it is still hard to choose alone" (Emily Huntley).

"Peace in heaven and glory in the highest," they sang. These words were taken from Psalm 118, the Messianic Psalm. "Why 'peace in heaven'? Perhaps they meant that peace in heaven was prophetic of that peace he was bringing to earth, that he was the Unconquerable One, before whom all enemies would lay down their arms without daring to fight" (R. C. Gillie).

III. Christ's Certainty of His Kingship, 19.39, 40. To the demand of the Pharisees that he should rebuke his disciples, repudiate these honors as undeserved, Jesus answered, "I tell you that, if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out." It has been thought that these words refer to Habakkuk 2.11. "The stones will cry out," however, was doubtless a proverbial expression meaning that even the insensible would be aroused to give expression to interest. The welcome which Jesus received as King was inevitable—it had to be.

"And where do you stand? Holding aloof as the Pharisees, the soldiers and traders of that first Palm Sunday? Ah, men and women, how many are standing today by the wayside as the Lord passes by! Or it may be that you are young and full of life and hope. You linger by the roadside under the palms with the grass and the flowers. Why leave that shade, you ask, for the hot path and the city's dust? Why, a King is passing! You can return to the shade and place when the triumph is over, but now, up and follow him! In the dust and heat we must often walk. It is only the palm-bearer who is worthy of him. Those hidden disciples along the way are counted with the scoffing Pharisees and the contemptuous Romans" (Frank E. Henry).

IV. Jesus Weeps over Jerusalem, 19. 41-44. Where the road from Bethany bends round the southern shoulder of Olivet, Jerusalem comes into full view. It is a beautiful sight. As Jesus reached this point and saw its massive walls, its many towers, its great temple so recently rebuilt by Herod, shining in its glory of marble and gold, and the great palaces, his prophetic soul realized that the city's greatness and glory were departing and he was moved to tears. How great was the contrast to him between the ideal and the actual!

Zion, "the city of God in the mountain of his holiness, the joy of the whole earth" had become a city of formalists, of hypocrites who oppressed the poor and rejected righteousness, and were determined to be rid of the Redeemer. Instead of crying, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory, shall come in," they were about to cry, "Crucify, Crucify" the King. And the King wept as he thought of what

Jerusalem might have been, what it was, and what it would be. The time was coming when the city would be desolate, not one stone left upon another, because it "knew not the time of its visitation."

The salvation of the city begins with the citizen. The city can never be holier than the homes of the people. If the city is to become the city of God, the homes must be his habitation. In the overcrowded so-called homes of the slums of some of our cities, children, like Oliver Twist in Fagin's den, are being educated to crime; in the wretched homes of unhappily married couples children are being deprived of the happy childhood which is theirs by right; and there are apparently prosperous homes where God is forgotten.

V. The Cleansing of the Temple, 19.45, 46. When the temple was being built, so great was the reverence for the House of God that the blocks were made ready in the quarry that they might be put together without noise. That reverence was a thing of the past, now. In the temple precincts animals were sold for the sacrifice and money was changed for the offerings. The temple market arose from the need of meeting the necessities of pilgrims from afar. Not only must they have their money changed into Jewish coins, but they must secure for sacrifice beasts and birds duly certified as virtually clean. The temple market had become a den of robbers, Jesus declared. It was a monopoly and was owned, or leased, by the sons of the High Priest Annas, as we learn from rabbinic literature, and they were noted for their greed and dishonesty.

Jesus entered the temple and began to cast out them that sold, saying unto them, "It is written, And my house shall be a house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of robbers." In King Lear, when the Earl of Kent desires to attach himself to the exiled king, he gives as his reason, "You have that in your face that I would fain call master-authority." This master-authority was in the face of Jesus and the traffickers fled before him.

"The kingdom should be like the King. It should have rights for the common man, tears for human need, and a scourge for rascality. It is for those who believe in Jesus, who call him not only Prophet and Priest, but King, to see to it that the kingdom does not belie the King!" (James I. Vance).

VI. The Alliance against Jesus, 19.47, 48. Chief priests and scribes and the leading men united in trying to find a way in which they could put Jesus to death, but the people hung upon his words as he taught in the temple, and because of them his enemies were foiled in their desire. The metaphor "hung upon him" is thought to have been derived from the action of a magnet upon iron.

VII. The Authority of Jesus Questioned, 20.1-8.

VIII. The Vineyard Parable, 20.9-18.

IX. Tribute to Cæsar, 20.19-26.

X. About the Resurrection, 20.27-40.

XI. The Question of Jesus, 20.41-44.

XII. The Guilt of the Scribes, 20.45-47.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The Lord hath need of him, verse 31. There is a wonderful facility and readiness to both borrow and lend among Orientals which is not easy to understand with our more restricted Western usages. They have a very common expression with reference to the rights of private property. They will merely say, "There is no ceremony between you and me." This comment may come from either side of the transaction, and may mean that the owner was perfectly ready to allow the use of property, or it may mean that the borrower feels quite at liberty to make use of the other's possessions as if they were his own. —William S. Nelson.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The first three chapters of Luke deal with the infancy of Jesus, and with the fourth chapter the account of his ministry begins. As early as the ninth chapter we are told of his final resolve to face his appointed fate. And it came to pass, when the days were well-nigh come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, 9.51. His face was as though he were going to Jerusalem, 9.53. Chapters nine to nineteen have been called the diary of the Jerusalem road. There is throughout the air of strain, of finality, of hastening on to the tragic end. We have not realized this in our studies, because we have been studying the parables and the momentous incidents in these chapters, but the following references will show how Luke keeps this goal continually in view: 13.22, 33; 17.11; 18.31; 19.28.

The Mount of Olives is the range of hills east of Jerusalem, separated from it by the Kidron Valley. The road from Jericho to Jerusalem passes Bethany, less than two miles from the Holy City. Bethphage is thought to have been a fig-growing district, for the word means "house of figs."

We have come to the Passover season when excitement was intense in Jerusalem. "There was no populous city, no remote hamlet, that did not furnish its contingent to what was practically an assembly of the entire nation. These innumerable bands of pilgrims marched upon Jerusalem from every quarter, singing the ancient Psalms of Israel, encouraging in one another a joyous ecstasy, full of eager hopes of some great national deliverance, to which the past history of the race, and especially the history of the Passover itself, gave sanction."

Palms on Sunday; the crown of thorns on Thursday; the cross on Friday—such were the gifts of the city over which Jesus wept. The morning and the evening of Sunday itself were in painful contrast: acclaimed King in the morning, in the evening Jesus quietly left the city accompanied only by the Twelve, silent, defeated, in danger of the assassin's thrust. "Those followers who had acclaimed him as the Messiah in the morning were chagrined at this disappointing of their hopes; when they saw no stupendous miracle, and looked on him as he allowed his own movement to flicker out without accomplishing anything great, they were angry with him, feeling that he had deluded them with the words of an empty dream."

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

An appeal to the eye and ear and heart may awaken sentiment and prepare the way for the surrender of the will. Jesus was offering himself as King for the last time, and therefore his offer was made in the most impressive way. He appealed to the imagination. He stirred the emotions. He did not mean that he was to be such a King as the people supposed; the borrowed colt, the garments of peasants, the banners of leafy branches were not to be the permanent furnishings of a court. He wished to secure the submission of their wills, the complete surrender of their lives, and therefore he made this stirring, dramatic, emotional appeal to the multitudes. He knew that religious feeling is an aid to religious faith.—Charles R. Erdman, in The Gospel of Luke.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE SUPREMACY OF JESUS

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with The Historical Background.

When Mr. Roosevelt returned from Africa with rare specimens for the Smithsonian Institute, he was welcomed by thousands of cheering, waving, enthusiastic admirers. That same day he said to his sister, "And they soon will be throwing rotten apples at me." He knew the fickleness of human nature."

No one knew that fickleness better than did Jesus. "They soon will be clamoring for my death," he must have said to himself as he rode into Jerusalem hailed by the joyous throng as their King. Why did he accept their plaudits?

What the Entry Meant to the People. The entry into the city showed Jesus at the crowning point of his triumph over the minds of the people. This triumph is not to be obscured by the possibility that some of the same persons

who shouted in the triumphal procession may have jeered in the procession to Calvary. The truth is that on the day of the entry the people seemed to see Jesus as he was. His entry meant that without reliance upon any of the arts which usually bring popular triumph, Jesus did win the sincere applause of the people for himself as the King of peace. It would not be just to say that the welcome was of no significance because its enthusiasm quickly died out. The welcome was not only a fulfilment of prophecy but was itself a prophecy. Just as in the midst of a storm a patch of sky may clear for an instant and show the blue depths beyond, so in the career of Jesus the clouds of misunderstanding broke for a moment that the real depths beyond might show themselves. The applause of the multitude on Palm Sunday was such a breaking of the clouds; the hosannas of the children and the shouts of the people were rifts through which the glories of a nobler sky revealed themselves.—Francis J. McConnell.

What the Triumphal Entry Meant to Jesus. Jesus never took a more decisive step than when he entered Jerusalem as a claimant to the Kingship of Israel. His disciples were only too willing to fall in with his arrangements, for at first he seemed to be coming over to their views which he had so long combated steadily. He seemed to them at last to be claiming an earthly Messiahship and to have taken off the leash from those followers who wished to assert his right to David's throne. But they must have been crestfallen and disappointed when the triumphal procession only ended in a visit of inspection to the temple and a private return to Bethany. Perplexity returned to their minds. This perplexity was to deepen during the days up to the crucifixion.

But to us the whole procedure is an illustration of our Lord's "splendid self-consistency." He had hitherto refused to allow any open claim to his Messiahship to be made. Why? Because he had been trying to give his hearers a new idea of what the true Messiah must be. When he had exhausted the possibilities of explanation and impression, he came boldly into the open and made his claim that he was the Expected One. Again, after making his public claim with such modest pomp and spontaneous acclamation as was possible, why did he become again the simple leader, undistinguished by any outward signs of authority? Because that was the kind of Messiah he was going to be, his only weapons spiritual, his only influence personal.

This was the matchless achievement of our Lord on Palm Sunday. He avowed himself as King, and at the same time interpreted what Kingship for him meant.—R. C. Gillie.

Behold, thy King Cometh unto thee! There are a great many men who are content to accept him as a prophet. They recognize in his words a heavenly exaltation, the atmosphere of a holiness which they know it would be well that human life could share. But in their practical choices they do not admit him above this rank of prophethood. They listen to his sayings, accept such of them as appeal to their preferences, complacently criticize and set aside others as impractical, and in the net result very often consider him as a beautiful visionary who said a great many things that can purify the individual's life, but whose principles cannot be taken too seriously in the practical organization of the world's affairs. But let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that this sort of admiration for the character and for part of the teachings of Jesus satisfies his own demand for the place that he is to hold in life. He is not to be the prophet whom men may listen to or forget as they choose. He is to be the King that cometh with authority. He is to be the center of the reorganization of all right life.

Which do we admit him to be, Prophet or Messiah? Do we allow his spirit to be exalted into the authority which we bow down to and obey? Is he to us then a prophetic voice which we can argue with and criticize and command on equal terms? Do we admit that his spirit of love, of self-sacrifice, of joy and service, is the kingly spirit which has the right to rule the affairs of life, which ultimately is wiser than all our short-sighted stratagems, and which alone can bring order out of chaos in this world of business and politics and diplomacy which we are so often tempted to administer by methods absolutely alien to the spirit we find in him? This is to see in him the fulfilment of the prophet's cry: "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee!"—Condensed from The Road of the Star, by W. Russell Bowie.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. The value of pageants.

2. "High-wrought emotion is a poor substitute for steady devotion; but cool, unemotional recognition of Christ as King is just as unnatural."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. By what parables had Jesus tried to prepare his disciples to face what was coming? 2. Why had they not understood? 3. What did Jesus mean when he said, "This is my body"? 4. What is the meaning of the Lord's Supper? 5. What is the social value of the Sacrament? 6. What lasting value should partaking of the Communion have for one? 7. Of what do you think while partaking of the Lord's Supper? 8. Should one not a church member accept the invitation to the Lord's Supper? Why?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

LOYALTY TO THE KING

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with Explanations and Comments.

The Significance of the Triumphal Entry. Would you know the significance of a triumphal entry, and what this event really meant to Jesus and the Jews? Go to Greece when Alexander returns from the East, burdened with spoils from his wars; or to Rome, when Cæsar comes down from the North, clothed with glory as with a garment. Captive kings stir the street's dust with their golden sandals as they grace the car of their conqueror. Trophies of battle are displayed—spears and shields, helmets and armor, banners and standards.

Thus into his capital rode Jesus! But what a contrast! Willing captives press close upon him, bound with golden links of love to his side. Glad feet keep step with him, not reluctant ones. Nor are trophies of his power wanting. Among them may be the beggar, Bartimæus, but yesterday blind, with new eyes looking his adoration and gratitude; Zacchæus, the little Napoleon of Jewish finance, grown rich by graft, but repentant now, and poorer; Lazarus, lately death's captive, a willing prisoner to the power of his Rescuer. Sinners forgiven, lepers cleansed, lame and sick made whole—all along the highway from Bethany to Jerusalem they crowd and shout, singing as a mighty choir. For we read: "And they that went before, cried, Hozanna to the Son of David; and they that followed, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Thus the chanting in the advance met the response far in the rear. Then those nearest to him took up the psalm: "Blessed is the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David, Hozanna in the highest."—Frank E. Henry.

The Cross Made out of Palms. On the Sunday before Easter in many churches the boys and girls who come to Sunday-school, and all the people who come to church, are given little crosses to pin on their coats and dresses. These crosses are made of strips of palm leaves.

Palms are meant for gladness, and for triumph; and a cross means pain and death. Why should things like palms, which suggest so much that is beautiful, be made into something terrible like a cross? Palms and crosses seem so different that they do not belong together at all.

When we think of Jesus, and think of the palms, we see again the people shouting his name, and crowding around him as though they admired him and loved him better than any one else in the world. But, presently, something very different happened. People began to find out that Jesus was not going to do the kind of things they had hoped. He was not come as a King, to make everybody rich of a sudden, and everything easy and smooth. He had come to teach the love of God; but men had to be in earnest to listen to him. They were disappointed, and as they were disappointed they began to grow angry. They listened to evil men who wanted to get rid of Jesus. Before many days went by, the same crowd which had gone shouting out to meet him and strewn the palm branches on his road, went roaring into the hall of Pilate, and lifted fierce hands against Jesus, and cried: "Crucify him!" And they went out to Calvary, and looked on with hard eyes as he was crucified.

So there was a real sense in which the palms had changed into the cross. The people seemed to welcome Jesus at first, but it was no real welcome. It was made up of words—very shallow, and very false—which presently changed

into hateful deeds. They were glad one day to name his name, but just as glad a few days afterwards to see him put to death.

And is not that the way it is sometimes with people even now? We may seem to welcome Jesus, but perhaps that welcome is not real. We speak his name as though we loved him, and then we turn against him, as though we did not love him at all.

Suppose a boy comes to Sunday-school and learns about Jesus. Perhaps he even joins the church, and stands up before God and the congregation and says that he wants to follow Jesus. Then perhaps the next day he goes to school, and when he is playing baseball he plays it in a mean, unfair way. If he thinks the umpire is not looking, he trips up another boy who is running the bases. He plays like a tough instead of like a gentleman. Or he bullies some small boy who is playing the game with him. Then other boys who look at him may shrug their shoulders. They think to themselves, "Is this all that it means to say you want to be Christ's follower?" What the boy said about the Lord Jesus does not matter very much. The thing that counts is what he does. Really to follow Jesus means courage, and honor, and fairness, and truth. When a boy throws all these things away, he is turning the palms of the fine words he said into the cross of a false betrayal.

Or suppose a girl who has said that she, too, wants to learn to love Christ and to follow him, and in Sunday-school sings the hymns, and looks as glad as the people did who came out of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, then goes home and is crabbed and cross. Suppose she is in a bad temper about everything her mother suggests which she does not want to do, and is continually insisting that everybody else should do things for her, and never wants herself to be loving and helpful in all the little things at home which might be done for others. Do you think that Christ can have much pleasure in the palms of the words she said and the hymns she sang in Sunday-school?

But what we have said need not be the end of the story. Palms do not have to change into crosses. We can say we love Jesus, and want to follow him, and mean it altogether.—Condensed from The Armor of Youth, by W. Russell Bowie.

We Have a King. There are two books in the Old Testament which are called The First Book of the Kings and The Second Book of the Kings, because they tell the story of the rulers of Israel and of Judah. There are four books in the New Testament which might be called The First, The Second, The Third and The Fourth Book of the Great King, for they tell the story of Jesus Christ the King of Kings.

More than three hundred years ago Gaspard de Coligny, the Huguenot captain of the Reformation in France, was defending the little town of St. Quentin against the Spaniards. Its ramparts were in ruins, fever and famine raged within, and the terrified people were talking of surrender. One day the Spaniards shot over the wall an arrow bearing a strip of parchment. The writing on the parchment promised to spare the lives and property of the people if they would open the city gates. Coligny took another strip of parchment, wrote on it two words, fixed it to a spear, and flung it over into the camp of the enemy. "Regem habemus"—We have a king—were the two words, and they meant that Coligny had faith in his country to win out, which his loyal soul saw summed up in the person of his sovereign.

We have a King, the King of goodness and truth and love. The King on whom we can always rely, the King to whom we owe our utmost loyalty. We have vowed to fight manfully under his banner: are we doing it? Are we overcoming for his sake our selfishness, pride, bad temper, whatever it is of which he disapproves? Are we doing unto others as we would have them do unto us? Are we loyal to him in word and deed?

Sentence Sermon.

Jesus shall reign wher'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run.—Watts.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What did the Feast of the Passover commemorate? 2. What is a sacrament? 3. What sacraments does your church observe? 4. What other names are given to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper? 5. Why do we call it the Communion Service? 6. What does this sacrament mean? 7. Do we need reminders of Jesus?

LESSON VIII—MAY 24

JESUS PREPARING FOR THE END

GOLDEN TEXT: This do in remembrance of me. Luke 22.19.

LESSON Luke 21.1 to 22.23 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 53.1-6

LUKE 22.7 And the day of unleavened bread came, on which the passover must be sacrificed. 8 And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and make ready for us the passover, that we may eat. 9 And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we make ready? 10 And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house whereinto he goeth. 11 And ye shall say unto the master of the house, The Teacher saith unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? 12 And he will show you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. 13 And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

14 And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the apostles with him. 15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: 16 for I say unto you, I shall not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. 17 And he received a cup, and when he had given thanks, he said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: 18 for I say unto you, I shall not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. 19 And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. 20 And the cup in like manner after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood, "even" that which is poured out for you. 21 But behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. 22 For the Son of man indeed goeth, as it hath been determined: but woe unto that man through whom he is betrayed! 23 And they began to question among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Widow's Mites, 21.1-3.

II. The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Messianic Coming, 21.4-36.

III. Teaching in the Temple Daily, 21.37, 38.

IV. The Bargain of Judas, 22.1-6.

V. The Preparation for Keeping the Passover, 22.7-13. While the city of Jerusalem was making ready to celebrate the Passover Supper, the day of unleavened bread, and the chief priests and elders were planning how they might put Jesus to death, Jesus bade two of his disciples, Peter and John, make preparations for their keeping of the feast. "Where?" they asked him, and Jesus directed them to enter Jerusalem and when they met a man bearing a pitcher of water to follow him. Water was carried by women in jars upon their heads, and a man doing this work would be a solitary and unusual figure. To the owner of the house to which the man would lead them Jesus bade them say that the Master asked where was the guest chamber in which he should eat the Passover with his disciples. The owner would show them a large upper room where they were to make ready for the Passover. The disciples followed his directions.

VI. The Prelude to the Lord's Supper, 22.14-18. When the hour was come (when evening was come, Matthew), Jesus sat down (reclined on a couch) with his disciples to partake of the Paschal Supper. "With desire have I desired [intensely have I longed] to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." Why? For his own sake. There was comfort for his own heart that he should be able to manifest his love. With tender, solemn thought he had looked forward to it, and he desired the support of their fellowship for what lay before him. For their sake also. The final act of suffering would be a great trial to the disciples. They were to know something of the sorrow of desolation, and Christ was eager to prepare them for the dark future. If they were assured of his deathless love they would find comfort when the shock of his death came. They could look back on this feast and on these words, and

gather strength to suffer and to wait. And so it is for us also who are his disciples. Our feast of love not only represents the desire of the Lord to give himself, but represents the joy of the gift to us.

Women with Water Jars

"If the Savior with desire desires to eat this Passover with us, shall there be no corresponding desire in our hearts? Will there be no answering response? It is all he asks for—desire. If we come humbly because we need, because we want, because we desire, he will fulfil the desire of them that fear him. It is not only that he gives gracious gifts for our need in sorrow or temptation or sin, and not only that he gives love, but also that he gives himself" (Hugh Black).

For I say unto you, I shall not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. "That is, until the true Passover has been offered by my death, and so the new kingdom established" (F. W. Farrar): thus he expressed his conviction that his earthly life was almost over.

Jesus received a cup, seemingly that used at the Passover Feast, for later, in verse 20, we are told of his use of the cup in the rite which we call the Lord's Supper. "The mention of two cups by St. Luke was early felt to be a difficulty, and accordingly a few ancient manuscripts reduced the cups to one, some by omitting the former cup, others by omitting the latter. If the words of verse eighteen are in their true position they seem to show that Jesus did not himself drink of the cup of the Eucharist. Matthew and Mark, however, place them after the blessing of the Eucharistic cup, instead of before it" (Dummelow). Upon receiving the cup Jesus gave thanks. For what did he have to be thankful at this last meal with his beloved followers? "His career was about to close ignominiously, his work ending in seeming failure, and no one was so much aware of this as himself. Doubtless he was grateful for the fellowship of these men who had followed him more or less enthusiastically for three years; and we have a right to suppose that the supreme occasion for thanksgiving lay in the fact that he had ideals worth dying for."

"For what shall we be thankful when we partake of the Communion, even though it may be for us, as for Jesus, a bitter hour? We should be grateful for many things, doubtless, but chiefly for Jesus Christ himself. It was his own injunction that his disciples should eat this meal in remembrance of him, and whenever we remember him, we have reason enough for thanksgiving" (Beebe).

Then Jesus reminded them that this was the last time he should partake with them of the Paschal wine: "I shall not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingdom of God shall come."

VII. The Institution of the Lord's Supper, 22.19, 20. And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it. It was unleavened bread, especially prepared for the Paschal meal. Because he broke off the pieces of bread (which was in the form of hard, flat, round cakes and was always broken, never cut), the ordinance is called the Breaking of Bread. From the Greek word for thanks, "eucharistesas," comes our word "Eucharist." And Jesus said, "This is my body which is given for you." The Roman Catholic today believes that while the priest breaks the bread and asks a blessing, a miracle is wrought and the bread becomes the actual body of Christ. Compare with

this metaphor the other metaphors of Jesus, "I am the light," "I am the door." Jesus meant that the bread represented his body, just as we say of a photograph, "This is my friend," meaning, This represents my friend. A Jewish rabbi explains as the view of Hebrew Christians that Jesus meant that as we come to his table he wants us to come in the attitude of feeling and knowing that we have been with him to the cross; that we can enter into his suffering and understanding of sin, and how it offends God: today it is the very bread, the very suffering, the realization of sin, and the knowledge of what our Lord Jesus has done for us, and for the world. "This is my body which is broken for you."

"The connection between Christ and us must be of the closest possible kind; so close that the assimilation of the food we eat is not too strong a figure to express it. The food we eat becomes our blood and flesh; it becomes our life, our self. And it does so by our eating it, not by our talking of it, not by our looking at it and admiring its nutritive properties, but only by eating it. And whatever process can make Christ entirely ours, and help us to assimilate all that is in him, this process we are to use."

"This do in remembrance of me." And through all the centuries since his followers have observed this service—in rude chapels, in great cathedrals, in all kinds of churches—in remembrance of Jesus. But what is it to remember Jesus? In the words of another: To remember Jesus is to accept him as our Mediator, to trust him as our Redeemer, to love him as our Friend, to obey him as our King, to take him for our all in all. Of all this the symbolic act is a pledge.

And as Jesus took the cup, he said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you." Because Paul says in First Corinthians (10.16), "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ?" the sacrament is also called Communion. As Moses sprinkled blood upon the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant which God hath made with you," so here Jesus declared that his blood is poured out to ratify a covenant. The graphic present is used (is poured out), for the sacrificial death is close at hand.

"If you shrink from all use of form and symbol, consider whether you are not called upon here by common courtesy toward God and your fellow-Christians to use these accepted symbols of the church's unity. On the other hand, if you delight in symbols, beware how you elaborate the form of the sacraments or speak of them as though they were ends in themselves. They are means of grace, not ends" (E. M. Chapman).

A Cup Recently Excavated. Believed similar to the cup used at the Lord's Supper.

VIII. The Startling Announcement, 22.21-23. Matthew and Mark separate the Passover from the institution of the Lord's Supper by the prediction of the betrayal. Luke records this at the close. It was a startling statement that Jesus made when he said, "But behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table." "It was the dropping of a Lyddite shell into their midst, destroying the whole atmosphere of peace" (Dean Brown). "For the Son of man indeed goeth, as it hath been determined," continued Jesus: "But woe unto that man through whom he is betrayed!"

"Jesus watches them as he tells them, and his eyes tell him that he has been right all these weeks, and that Judas is going to do it, and will do it now, and the revelation is not merely to his disciples, but also to himself. He knows. It is not a curse that he utters, it is a cry of pain. Elsewhere we read: 'It were better for that man if he had never been born.' Don't read too much theology into that, it was the instinctive spirit of pity speaking in the ordinary longing of the heart—'better for him never to have been born'" (T. R. Glover).

Excitement, consternation, horror must have been portrayed on the faces of

the disciples as they all began to question among themselves which of them it was that should do this thing. "And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began to say unto him, every one, 'Is it I, Lord' " are Matthew's words.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Where wilt thou that we make ready? verse 9. For they might make ready anywhere, since the houses at Jerusalem were not to be hired, but during the time of the feast they were of common right.—Lightfoot.

The rabbis said, "It is a tradition that houses were not let for hire at Jerusalem, because they were not privately owned, nor were beds, but the householder received from his guests as recompense the skins of the animals sacrificed."—One Volume Commentary.

This is my body, verse 22. Early men in all parts of the world have thought that by eating the flesh of gods or heroes they gained something of the spirit of the beings whose flesh they consumed. Jesus came into the world to impart to men his spirit. If all men had Jesus' power to resist temptation, his disposition, and his ability and determination to do the will of God, the Kingdom of God would already be here. He was about to die, and desired to leave behind an avenue through which during the centuries men and women of all degrees of intelligence might not only keep him in remembrance, but imbibe his spirit—his life. He chose a symbolism which had been employed from the time of cave-dwelling men. The bread and wine became, on the one hand, symbols of his flesh and blood, and on the other, symbols of the life, spirit, attitude of God which Jesus himself possessed, and which he gave his life to impart to men. It is a symbolism capable of appealing to all men, whatever their state of education or culture, and has been for nineteen hundred years the means of helping an untold number to realize that they are in some degree partakers of the life of God and of the spirit of his Son.—George A. Barton, in Jesus of Nazareth.

Syrians talk to one another in terms of unbounded intimacy and unrestrained affection. The expressions, "My brother," "My eyes," "My soul," "My heart," and the like, form the life-centers of the conversation. "My life, my blood are for you; take the very sight of my eyes, if you will!" Was it, therefore, strange that the Master, whose whole life was a living sacrifice, should say to his intimate friends, as he handed them the bread and the cup on that momentous night, "Take, eat; this is my body"; and "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood"? Here he charged the ordinary words of friendly intercourse with rare spiritual richness and made the common speech of his people express eternal realities.—Abraham Mitrie Rihbany, in The Syrian Christ.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The place was an upper room, according to tradition, the one where the disciples afterwards met on the Day of Pentecost. The time of the celebration, according to the Synoptists, was after sunset on Thursday, the evening before the crucifixion, April 6, A.D. 30.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

A child may be led to the Communion long before he can comprehend its depth of meaning; nevertheless, he will receive that which in our day children very much need, an impression of something very solemn and sacred, which words alone may fail to convey.

Careful preparation must be made for it. Entered upon off-hand, it may not be an actual injury, but it will, at least, fail of its total possibility.

The service may be placed before the class by the teacher as the assent of the mind to love for Jesus Christ. The promise to observe it in this spirit may then be sought, and in most cases can be obtained. Experience has shown that not more than one scholar in ten is unwilling to give this assent.

The nature of the Communion need not be elaborately explained; but at least it may be shown that by this act we "remember Jesus Christ" in gratitude for his love to us and of his death for us. That thought expressed by the child in this concrete form is as solemn, as intelligent, as meaningful as any expression that is ever gained from a child in an evangelistic service.

This object kept before the class for a few Sundays in advance by an earnest teacher will have prepared the children to put themselves entirely into the act when the time comes.

When the day arrives for the service, let seats be reserved for pupils by classes, where they may sit with their teachers. The grip of class unity and unanimity may be used lawfully to aid the one who is reluctant or inadequately enlisted.

The service will quicken the hopes of the older members of the church. It is an illustration, which we too seldom see, of the young life coming to renew and energize the life of the church, which otherwise will soon fade away. It can easily be the great day of the year in the spiritual history of the church.—Condensed from an article in The Sunday School Journal, by W. Arter Wright.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE MEANING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Beginning the Lesson. We are all familiar with Titian's wonderful picture of The Last Supper, on which he himself said that he had worked almost daily for seven years. Do you know these beautiful words of Dr. John T. McFarland's about the monk and the picture?

"For sixty years and more, daily have I
Upon that picture looked," an aged monk
Said gently to a stranger standing mute
In the Escurial Hall, absorbed before
Great Titian's draft of the Last Supper—rich
In color, texture, tone, made doubly so
By age. "For sixty years: and I from youth
To age have passed, and from these halls, as flows
A dream, my seniors all have gone, and kings
Have died, and thrones have passed away, but there
Those faces on the canvas have remained—
The Master and the Twelve, and still look down
Upon me as they did of old. All else
Seems passing shadow; only these are real."
Ah, Monk, the latest man, upon the verge
Of time, back-looking o'er the drift of years,
The shadow-shifting march of humankind,
Will see above it all that changeless Face,
Calm, looking down through mists of change, and feel
As thou didst feel before that picture there!

Continue with Explanations and Comments.

Why Jesus Longed to Partake of the Passover before his Suffering. One grows up, thanks to the theology of one's teachers, with a picture in one's mind of the omniscience of Jesus which is not in the Gospels. Is the Incarnation a real thing, or is it a piece of playacting? Do you remember in the "Arabian Nights," how the Caliph goes through the streets at night disguised, and at any moment he can pull back the disguise and there is the Caliph, and the situation is cleared? It is not so in the Gospels. The Epistle to the Hebrews tells us the real story: He learnt by what he suffered, and for a week, a month, perhaps more, he has been suffering Judas Iscariot. By the man's very look Jesus read him, knew that disaster was coming there; but when, or how, or where—those were the questions that helped to make the Passion what it was. It has been suggested that he took pains to avoid being assassinated quietly during these last weeks or days; and now he knows by some instinct that it is to be now. Another thing: the crowds have failed him; there was nothing in them; the educated have failed him, and all depends on these men. And this is his last hour with them. Yes, more than that; it is their last hour with him. Before him lies—Oh! you know the story. But how much of it does the suffering spirit see, as you see it in cold blood? And if he can have them with him for that hour, what will it mean? He wants these men with him, wants to be with them for what he can do for them; wants them with him for what they will do for him—to stand by him, to be with him; and we see in a little what he means.—From a Sermon by T. R. Glover.

The Value of the Lord's Supper. The Holy Communion has always appealed to the religious imagination of Christians as being a particularly beautiful

symbol of that fellowship which all followers of Christ should have with each other, the kind of fellowship which we enjoy with those people whom we invite to dine with us often just because we like to be with them.

In one of the prayers of our Communion Service the petition is made that we may so eat the body and drink the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ "that we may live and grow thereby." Important as human fellowship is to our highest welfare, divine fellowship is even more important. There come times when the sympathy and companionship of friends fail us. We never reach the time when a living faith in Jesus Christ and the sense of his presence cannot help us. In this meal the Host offers himself as the food which is eaten by his guests. "Eat of my body," "Drink of my blood," "Be nourished by the sacrifice which I make of myself in your behalf," "Feed on me"—these are the great words of Jesus wherever the Communion is administered. The idea, of course, is simply that Christ gives himself to us in the hours of intimate communion with him in some such way as every true friend gives himself to another, and we are refreshed.

Another petition in one of the prayers always used when this sacrament is administered is that we may "take this Holy Communion to our comfort." This prayer is answered in the life of every one who, in receiving the sacrament, has a vivid sense of fellowship with Christ, and who finds the irritations of life growing less, the frictions reduced, and the strain slackened as the result of his communion.

Roman soldiers were required as far as possible to return to Rome once a year and there renew their pledge of allegiance to their emperor and supreme commander. So Christians come very often to the table of their Lord, renewing their vows of loyalty and obedience to him. To what do we pledge ourselves? In the familiar words of the invitation to the Communion, "to lead a new life, following the commandments of God and walking from henceforth in his holy ways."—Condensed from an article in The Zion's Herald, by James A. Beebe.

Our Need of the Communion. If a friend is the one who summons us to our best, then is not Jesus Christ our best Friend, and should we not think of the Communion as one of his chief appeals to us to be our best? The Lord's Supper looks not back to our past with a critical eye, but to our future with a hopeful one. The Master appeals from what we have been to what we may be. He bids us come, not because he sees we are better than we have been, but because he wants us to be. To stay away because our hearts are cold is to refuse to go to the fire till we are warm.—Dr. Maltbie D. Babcock.

To What Partaking of the Sacrament Should Lead. Here is a means, typical of a universal law, not only conveying to us the assurance of a real and spiritual fact, but enabling us to develop the appreciation of the universality of the spiritual, and helping us so to live as to employ and to embody the Spirit's grace through every channel. By our use of the particular we are led to a general way of life which thus becomes sacramental through and through. We say special prayers largely that we may learn to pray without ceasing. We baptize that we may be empowered to rise again daily to newness of life. We partake of the Eucharist that in all our lives we may feed upon God and fulfil our fellowship with him and with one another. Through particular means, means singularly adapted to our human characters and needs, we are led into the way of life of which they are typical expressions and for which they should be effective agents.—Charles E. Raven, in the Future of Christianity.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. Determinism and freedom.

2. It is a burning shame that a sacrament meant by the Savior to unite all his disciples should have divided them more than anything else, said an Episcopalian minister. The Anglo-Catholic view of the Eucharist. The Quaker view. The view of those who see in it, to use the phrase of Professor Seeley, no more than "a Christian club dinner."

3. The communion service a help to the spiritual life.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What do we know about Jesus' prayer life? 2. How do you explain the words "sleeping for sorrow"? 3. For what does "the cup" stand? 4. What does it mean in Ps. 75.8? In Ps. 23.5? In Ps. 2? 5. How do you understand the agony in the

Garden? 6. Why was the cross inevitable? 7. What help for us has the Gethsemane suffering?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE MEANING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Beginning the Lesson. It was customary for the Roman soldier, wherever possible, to return to the city of Rome every year and renew the oath of allegiance to the emperor which he took when he became a soldier. In observing the sacrament of the Lord's Supper we renew our allegiance to the King of kings. Let us recall how Jesus asked us to do this in remembrance of him.

Follow with Explanations and Comments.

The Lord's Supper in the Early Church. We read frequently in Paul's letters of salutations from the church in the house of Aquila, of Priscilla, and of other persons: indicating how necessarily small and secret were the Church centers in those apostolic days. It is pleasant to think of the Eucharist as celebrated in them. It is early morning and the cool sunlight just touches the tops of cypress trees and expels the shadows from the marble colonnade that leads from a low Greek house to a garden below the sloping lawns. There, in a recess formed by box and screened by olive trees, stands a rude stone altar on which sacrifices were once offered to the old, forgotten gods of Roman ancestors. Nearby is an entrance to the elaborately constructed catacomb beneath, burying ground or church in perilous times of persecution. Voices, in tones of exultant gladness, chant now a Latin hymn, now the "Kyrie eleison" from the liturgy. The rude, antique stone is gay with fresh flowers and bright with little jets of light that burn in quaint oil-lamps set here and there upon it. The air is pungent with perfumes, cedar and box, meadowsweet and frankincense. Before the altar stands an old man, clad in a white garment of wool. Bending over the altar, he blesses bread and wine. Presently he turns, gives little flakes of the white bread to the people kneeling round about, and offers them the cup. There are the noble Roman matron whose house it is, a few of her friends from similar households, the servants of the villa, shepherds who tend her flocks on the campagna, maidens who weave the fleece into wool, young men who clip the box and prune the ilex. Every face is radiant with joy, every eye bright with the vision of things unseen and eternal. They will go forth presently, every one of them to difficulty, some to persecution, some to torture, some to death; but none to fear. They know themselves redeemed from the power of the world. They are Christ's and Christ is God's. Upon them the ends of the world are come. Imperial Rome will crumble and paganism decay; they are the hope and the promise of the future. And, even humanly speaking, how right they were!—Latta Griswold, in Values of Catholic Faith.

The Meaning of the Lord's Supper. See the preceding topic.

Why We Need a Reminder of Jesus. "Sometimes I'm afraid I'm not a Christian at all," the boy said doggedly. "I thought I was when I joined the church, but I don't seem to have the same interest, somehow. It isn't easy for me to remember God—to think about him a hundred times a day as I feel sure a Christian ought to do."

"I am thinking about the time your father was away from home so long—on that business trip in the West." The minister spoke slowly, looking away toward the blue hills. "There was nearly a year you didn't see him, I think. Was it hard for you to remember him?"

"Not a bit." There was no uncertainty in the frank reply. "I don't suppose I thought of him as often as I do when he's in and out every few hours in the day—that is, after the first, when we all missed him so much. But we had letters every week, and of course we talked about him—mother and the girls, and all of us—and kept looking forward to the time when he'd come home. No, there wasn't much chance to forget him."

"Suppose there had been no letters, Harry? Suppose your father's name had been dropped in conversation? Suppose—"

"It would have made a difference," the other broke in eagerly. "The house

would have been there, though, and the things father had given us. They'd have kept him in mind—for a time, at least. I don't know how it would have been after he had been away years and years."

"We can't see God," said the minister, after a thoughtful pause. "He is very near us, but until we have keener eyes than we have now, we must take that on trust. It isn't to be wondered at that we forget God when so many other things that we can see and touch and feel crowd in upon us. No doubt our heavenly Father took all that into account when he gave us his holy word—something like your father's weekly letters—and his house, where the members of his family could meet and talk about him. I believe that's what the Bible and the Church ought to mean to us, Harry."

"I didn't stay to communion the last time," the boy admitted, dropping his eyes. "I see what you mean, and it's right, too. We had two cousins visiting that day, and they—well, they weren't at all that sort. I've missed a good many other Sundays, too; and this summer has been such a rush that my Bible reading has gone by pretty often. A fellow needs all the reminders of God he can have in a world like this."

"He certainly does, Harry," said the minister, smiling. "I fancy you're on the right track."—The Youth's Companion.

The Spirit in which One Should Come to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It is of great importance that one should come to this sacrament with both realization and aspiration; knowing in what spirit he should come in order to be blessed of God, and with all his heart desiring thus to come. The spirit is defined in an ancient question and answer. "What is required of those that come to the Lord's Supper? To examine themselves, whether they repent them truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life; have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death; and be in charity with all men."

Thus one is to examine himself. Do I repent me truly of my former sins? What are these sins in thought, in word, in deed, measured by the commandments, measured by the Beatitudes? What am I doing against the will of God? What am I leaving undone? Am I honestly desirous to be better? And as to my faith: do I remember the death of Christ with thanksgiving for his love and sacrifice for me? Am I loyal to him, as a soldier is loyal to his captain, or as a knight was loyal to his quest? And am I in charity with all? Is there any one towards whom I have a heart of hatred? Am I honestly endeavoring, though under difficulty, to be forgiving? Am I making the place where I live more pleasant because I live there? Am I of use in the world, ministering to the needs of others?

Then self-examination rises into petition. In the spirit of penitence and aspiration, one approaches his heavenly Father:

O Almighty God, who dost put into our minds good desires and dost give us grace and strength to bring them to good effect; help me in my weakness and failure and penitence with thy mighty power; enable me now to begin again another and better life, wherein by thought and word and deed I may please thee; and fill my heart anew with love for thee and for all men; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.—George Hodges, in The Training of Children in Religion.

Sentence Sermons. At the Lord's Supper we have an opportunity of giving ourselves once more to his love and service.

"In memory of the Savior's love,
We keep the sacred feast,
Where every humble, contrite heart
Is made a welcome guest."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up and Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where did Jesus spend the last Thursday evening with his disciples? 2. What did he then say that one of his disciples would do that night? 3. Where was Gethsemane? 4. What sort of a garden was it? 5. What brook did Jesus and his disciples cross on the way to the Mount of Olives? 6. Who was missing from the group in Gethsemane? Why? 7. What do we know about Jesus' prayer-life? 8. What petition in the Lord's Prayer is recalled by the prayer in Gethsemane? 9. Commit to memory Sidney Lanier's poem entitled "A Ballad of Trees and the Master."

LESSON IX—MAY 31

JESUS IN GETHSEMANE

GOLDEN TEXT: Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. Luke 22.42.

LESSON Luke 22.24-71 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 130

LUKE 22.39 And he came out, and went, as his custom was, unto the mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed him. 40 And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. 41 And he was parted from them about a stone's cast; and he kneeled down and prayed, 42 saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. 43 And there appeared unto him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. 44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground. 45 And when he rose up from his prayer, he came unto the disciples, and found them sleeping for sorrow, 46 and said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.

47 While he yet spake, behold, a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them; and he drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. 48 But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? 49 And when they that were about him saw what would follow, they said, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? 50 And a certain one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and struck off his right ear. 51 But Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye "them" thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him. 52 And Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and elders, that were come against him, Are ye come out, as against a robber, with swords and staves? 53 When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched not forth your hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

54 And they seized him, and led him "away," and brought him into the high priest's house. But Peter followed afar off.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. Peter's Denial Foretold, verses 31-34.

II. The Agony in the Garden, verses 39-44. Jesus went, as his custom was, unto the Mount of Olives, for he ofttimes resorted thither with his disciples, John tells us (18.2). His disciples followed him. When he reached the customary place of prayer, the Garden of Gethsemane, he turned to them and said, "Pray that ye enter not into temptation"—that ye be not tempted to forsake me. When the moment of arrest came, prayer had made the Master calm and strong, and from lack of prayer his eleven disciples were frantic and cowardly.

"Doubtless prayer and fellowship are not tied to any locality. Jesus was as near to the Father in Jerusalem as anywhere; he did not require the sights and sounds of the garden to recall God to his mind; but is it not significant that even he turned in the hour of his spiritual conflict to the place at which for some time he had been accustomed to be specially conscious of God's presence? Human experience generally finds it helpful to employ this practice of devotion. Wherever our lot chances to be cast, even for a short time, in town or country, it is wise for us to consecrate some spot indoors or out of doors, where we can concentrate our minds in order to feel specially alone with God" (James Moffat).

And Jesus went on, a stone's throw away from his waiting disciples.

"It was but a stone's throw, and yet an infinite gulf now lay between him and them. And so it is always in human life. We must needs go to the most sacred places of our life alone. We can bear no witnesses when the agony of life gathers around us. We must needs go beyond the kind gaze of friends, beyond their pity and their help, when the great transactions of the soul are to be achieved. In those few steps our Lord passed from the loud life of the world into the silent places of the infinite and the eternal" (W. J. Dawson).

And he kneeled down and prayed, saying, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me." The "cup" expresses the appointed portion: in Ps. 75.8 it is the portion of judgment; in Ps. 23.5, of mercy or blessing; here, of suffering and bearing the sins of the world on the cross.

"Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done," Jesus prayed. "As Christ was God and man, there were in him two wills, a human and a divine will, and the former did not always conform itself to the latter without an inner struggle; compare Jn. 5.30; 6.38" (One Volume Commentary).

"When he said, 'Thy will be done,' all the obscurity began to scatter, and those words which he said four days later, after he had risen, to his disciples, 'Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?'—words with the echo in them of the same surprise with which he long before spoke to his parents in the temple,—words full of the peace of satisfied intelligence,—began to take shape upon his lips.

"It is a poor and pitiable life indeed that cannot understand in some degree, out of its own history, this experience of the temptation and of Gethsemane. Who of us has not bowed his will to some supreme law, accepted some obedience as the atmosphere in which his life must live, and found at once that his mind's darkness turned to light, and that many a hard question found its answer? Who has not sometimes seemed to see it all as clear as daylight, that not by the sharpening of the intellect to supernatural acuteness, but by the submission of the nature to its true authority, man was at last to conquer truth; that not by agonizing struggles over contradictory evidence, but by the harmony with him in whom the answers to all our doubts are folded, a harmony with him brought by obedience to him, our doubts must be enlightened?" (Phillips Brooks).

And there appeared unto him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. Many ancient authorities omit verses 43 and 44, Revised Version.

"I know that angel. He has been to me. Always and everywhere, when my soul has surrendered to the divine will, the angel comes, and my soul is refreshed. The laying down of self is the taking up of God. When I lose my will, I gain the Infinite. When I consecrate my weakness, I put on strength and majesty like a robe" (J. H. Jowett).

And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground. How shall we understand this agony? Could it have been fear of the suffering and death on the cross? In this connection the behavior of Socrates, the Greek philosopher, is often recalled, his composure in the face of death, his refusal to seize the way of escape from prison which was revealed to him, his cheerful philosophies with his friends about death and immortality, and the courage with which he drank the poisoned cup offered to him. Was Socrates greater than Christ? Were Stephen and all the martyrs since Stephen more courageous in facing death? Shall we not rather believe with a noted thinker that he was agonizing over his course of action? "Should he remain in Jerusalem? That would be to insure his arrest and death. Could his mission survive that catastrophe? Could these timid, half-educated fishermen carry on his work? His anguish was not dread of the tragedy of the morrow. Many a soldier in the late war has faced unhesitatingly greater physical pain and one longer continued. His was the greater dread of a greater tragedy—dread lest he fail to understand his Father's will."

"So let me follow after thee,
It may be to Gethsemane,
To suffer, pray, and conquer still,
Because I do my Father's will."

III. Friends who Failed, verses 45, 46. And when he rose up from his prayer, he came unto the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow. Matthew and Mark speak of two other prayers, each following a turning to the disciples for sympathy. Jesus had forewarned his disciples of the approaching tragedy. As he partook with them the Last Supper he told them explicitly that one of them would betray him, that Peter would deny him, that all would forsake him. On entering the Garden he had asked the

privileged three, Peter, James, and John, to keep guard while he went farther on and prayed. How sorely he needed the comfort of their sympathetic presence! Yet they failed him just when he needed them most. On returning to them he found them sleeping for sorrow. A strange conjunction of words, yet no one will have difficulty in understanding them who has ever experienced the stupefaction which kind nature sends to the senses when he has borne the utmost that can be borne.

"Why sleep ye?" Jesus said to the disciples; "rise and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

IV. The Betrayal and Arrest, verses 47-54. While he yet spake, a multitude approached, among them Judas, who at once drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss!" exclaimed Jesus. "There is a fullest knowledge of all the things which touch us closest which can come to us only with their actual touch. Your friend is very sick. For days and days you know that he must die. At last he dies; and oh, you all know how suddenly death comes even to those who think they are expecting it most surely. This truth seems to me to throw light upon some things in the experience of Jesus which sometimes puzzle us. There is a kind of knowledge of Judas' treason which not even Jesus can have till he feels the cold kiss of the traitor on his cheek; there is a knowledge of Herod's scorn and of the Jews' hatred which the divine heart cannot gather except out of the sneering lips and flashing eyes of his persecutors in the hour of their triumph" (Phillips Brooks).

Georg Fassnacht as Judas in the Passion Play

"The value of the career of Judas to us is that it is likely to be repeated in real life at any time. Judas had lost faith in Jesus. Most of the other disciples had, too, for that matter, but they remained personally loyal to him. That is to say, they ceased to see just what Jesus was aiming at, but they held fast to him, nevertheless. Judas had been 'disillusioned.' It seemed likely to Judas that it did not longer make much difference what he did about Jesus. The authorities were going to seize Jesus in any event—and it did not make much difference if they did. He himself would make himself solid with the authorities by helping them. All this is black enough, but it is not the blackness that takes Judas clear out of the human category. He is altogether human. His type of wrongdoing is common enough, even today" (Francis J. McConnell).

"Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" asked one of his disciples, and without waiting for an answer Peter, the impetuous, drew his sword and struck off the right ear of the servant of the high priest.

"Easier to smite with Peter's sword,
Than watch one hour in humbling prayer" (Whittier).

"Suffer ye them thus far," commanded Jesus, as he healed the servant's ear, and then he turned to the crowd that were come out against him, and calmly said: "Are ye come out as against a robber, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched not forth your hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness." Read the account in Mt. 26.47-56.

And they seized him, and brought him into the high priest's house. He was first taken to the house of Annas, the ex-high priest, "a man of very great consequence, the virtual head of ecclesiastical affairs, though Caiaphas, his son-in-law, was the nominal head." No witnesses were called, but an attempt was made to ensnare Jesus in his words. Here a brutal officer struck Jesus. Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas.

V. Peter's Denial, verses 54-62. Peter had followed Jesus afar off, and in the court of the palace three times denied his Lord.

VI. The Mocking and the Jewish Trial, verses 63-71.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

He kneeled down and prayed, verse 41. His kneeling was a proof of intense emotion, as standing was the usual attitude of prayer among the Jews. In the Apostolic Church kneeling seems to have been usual, perhaps following Christ's practice here.—A. E. Garvie.

From Hofmann's Picture of Christ in Gethsemane

And being in an agony, verse 44. How true to the demonstrative Oriental nature here! The faithful and touching realism of the record is an example of the childlike responsiveness of the Syrian nature to feelings of sorrow, no less striking than the experience itself. It seems to me that if an Anglo-Saxon teacher in similar circumstances had ever allowed himself to agonize and to sweat "as it were great drops of blood," his chronicler in describing the scene would have safeguarded the dignity of his race by simply saying that the distressed teacher was "visibly affected"!—Abraham Mitrie Rihbany.

He drew near unto Jesus to kiss him, verse 47. Judas invented no new sign by which to point Jesus out to the Roman soldiers, but employed an old custom for the consummation of an evil design. In saluting one another, men friends of the same social rank kiss one another on both cheeks, sometimes with very noisy profusion.—Abraham Mitrie Rihbany.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

After partaking of the Last Supper Jesus and his eleven disciples passed swiftly through the streets of Jerusalem and out through the eastern gate in the surrounding wall (now called St. Stephen's Gate), and then over the bridge which crossed the little brook Kedron and on to the Mount of Olives. On the western slope of the Mount, between two paths which led over the hill to Bethany, was the Garden of Gethsemane, which was their objective. For thousands of others besides this little company there was no sleeping room in the city at this Passover season, and many of them had booths on the hillside. "Judas has gone to buy food for tomorrow," thought the disciples, but Jesus knew that he had gone to arrange for his betrayal.

An Oriental garden is not a place for flowers or vegetables, but is a grove of fruit trees, shade trees, or shrubs. You are familiar with the picture of the traditional Garden of Gethsemane as it looks today, a walled enclosure with its eight venerable olive trees—whose branches are propped up by supporting pillars, and whose gnarled trunks resemble iron rather than wood,—its cypress trees, its straight paths and prim flower-beds tended by Franciscan monks.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE MEANING OF GETHSEMANE

Beginning the Lesson. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. Jesus has come to the dark valley of the shadow. Reverently we approach the account of his suffering.

His agony we cannot measure, the mystery of it we cannot fathom. But through it all we see the willing submission to his Father's will and the great love for all humanity that urged him onward to the consummation of his mission.

"Toward the garden called Gethsemane
We turn our faces and our steps today,
And wait in hushed and pitying grief apart,
While Christ takes the world's sins upon his heart!
For this he came—the Child of Bethlehem!
To meet this hour he trod strange, toilsome roads,
Misunderstood, despised, hated and feared,
He takes at last the heaviest of all loads—
To bear for others punishment and pain,
And so redeem the world for God again!"

The Meaning of Gethsemane. What we really want is the inner meaning. We seek for a revelation of what was in Christ's mind as he faced the issue and accepted the cross. Theories about it often seem artificial and constructed to explain away an intellectual difficulty. For him it was a vital fact, not a theory. He went forward to the cross because he saw that it was necessarily

The Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane on the left; the wall of Jerusalem on the right

involved in the life which he was living. We should need to understand his mind and in some measure feel what he felt with that pain and stigma and defeat close in front of him and with no way around it.

"Have in you," St. Paul says, "the mind which was in Christ Jesus . . . who became obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (Phil. 2. 5-8). That "mind" is exactly what we are seeking for. We are trying to catch the secret and to find out what was in his mind as he prayed in Gethsemane and walked under his wooden beams to Calvary and felt the nails pierce his flesh. Not a syllable is spoken which undertakes to say in plain words for wayfaring men what the deep experience meant. But perhaps we can come close to the heart of its meaning if we try to live our way into the agonizing utterances which break out and reveal at least dimly what he was feeling as he went steadily on with his supreme venture of love.

He was altogether concerned with the supreme law of the spiritual life which his whole teaching and practice in Galilee had expressed and illustrated: "He that loses his life, the same shall save it." "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" i.e., the very thing that makes life life. If thy hand or thy eye hinder thee in the pursuit of thy spiritual goal, cut the one off and bore the other out and fling them away. It is better to enter life maimed and mutilated than to be "safe" and miss it.

"The Son of man came to minister and to give his life for others." At no point did Christ reverse popular opinion more completely than in his insistence upon self-sacrifice as the principle of human redemption, of spiritual deliverance. It had been assumed too easily that the Messiah was to be a world-ruler, a greater David, who should break the yoke of the foreign oppressor by his power and restore the kingdom to Israel. All men were looking for a splendid and irresistible king of the Jews. The consternation of the disciples as the catastrophe came on and the jeer of the mob—"Himself he could not save"—reveal clearly how the tide of thought was running.

The issue, then, in the mind of Christ is sharply drawn between the popular expectation and the fulfilment of the principle of redemption which his own life embodied and incarnated. Gethsemane is, thus, the scene of the world's greatest battle, though it is an inner battle. Two ways of life, as different as light and darkness, are here in conflict. If Christ shall decide to save himself from his hour, shall choose to escape from the agony which attaches to redeeming love, and shall emerge from his struggles with his decision made to be the kind of Messiah the people want, then divine purpose, eternal love, and spiritual hopes for men will have been defeated. He feels that he could call down twelve legions of angels to deliver him from the cross, but that way of escape would not be victory—it would be a new triumph for the forces of evil. And yet the bloody sweat, the groans and cries of a soul in deepest agony show how real the temptation was, how unspeakably hard was the lonely testing.

On the other side of the issue the case stands clear. There was no way to save men from sin and selfishness without the appeal of the uttermost self-sacrifice, without the boundless cost of uncalculating love. The only way to win men, to redeem them, to lift them out of the lethargy and unconcern of worldliness, or out of the black depth of willful sin, is to make them see the tragic cost of sin, to create in their souls a passion for God and for holiness and purity of life. And only one thing will do that for a man—the discovery that some one understands him, appreciates his condition, feels his defeat and still believes in him, suffers with him and loves him, just as though he deserved such grace. The way, in fact, to beget love in the soul of a person is to begin by loving the person and suffering with him and for him.

We can almost hear Christ saying in the dark of the garden, as he did say in the light of Pilate's palace, "For this cause was I born, and to this end came I into the world." To turn away from that divine mission for any other goal was to accomplish defeat both for himself and for the race forever. Most like us he seems when the torn heart cries: "Let this cup pass, if possible." "Save me from this hour." "Thy will be done." He emerges from the crisis with the cross inevitable but with the victory clearly won. As at the beginning, so at the end of his ministry he has met the most subtle temptation to take an easier way to seeming victory and success, and instead he takes the road to Golgotha and risks his whole mission on the venture of suffering, sacrificial love, freely, uncalculatingly poured out.—Condensed from The World Within, by Rufus M. Jones.

What Are We Prepared to Endure for our Lord? Is there not much religion today that breathes little of the spirit of sacrifice and consecration? Nothing really is given up for Christ's sake; nothing in substance, time, popularity, or feeling. We justly measure the value of all things by the degree of sacrifice which enters into them. Even in trade this principle unconsciously asserts itself. The pearl is so precious because the diver has put life into peril to secure it. The orchid is so costly because the explorer has dared dangerous forests and swamps to possess it. The diamond is reserved for the king's crown because its recovery from the secret mine involved unknown effort and sacrifice. So all through the catalogue of costliest things. And in the social world this principle asserts itself even more distinctly. We hold lightly the cheap courtesies of conventional life; we begin to esteem attentions, actions, gifts, as they imply thought, effort and denial on the part of him who offers them. Motherhood glows into the sublimest relation because it implies the largest sacrifice. And surely this thought must come into religion. Our discipleship becomes significant as it involves somewhat of the infinitely self-

renouncing spirit of our Master. What are we prepared to endure, to give, to effect in the cause of our Lord and for the love of our Lord? The religion that costs nothing is worth exactly what it costs.—W. L. Watkinson, in Studies in Christian Character.

Gethsemane.

There is a way which man hath trod
For lo, these thronging, countless years;
It is the way of life, of God;
It is the way of right, of tears;
Its winding we may not foresee;
It is the way—Gethsemane.

It is the way whereby we know
Life's larger meanings and its claims,
The fellowship of human woe,
Our partnership with other's pains.
It is the way which seems to be
Life's only way—Gethsemane.—Charles Russell Wakeley.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. The Christian Scientist's fundamental error in believing it to be God's will that there should be no sickness nor suffering.

2. How to know the will of God. See the last chapters, 13-15, of The Ideal Life, by Henry Drummond.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Is the site of Golgotha known? 2. In what respects did the crucifixion of Jesus differ from the usual custom of the Romans? 3. Why were the two malefactors crucified with Jesus? 4. What were the "seven words from the cross"? 5. Why did Christ accept death on the cross?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

OBEYING GOD AT ANY COST

Beginning the Lesson. There is a hymn beginning, "My Jesus, as thou wilt"; do you know it? It was written by a Lutheran minister when in great affliction. His wife had died, his church had burned, his children had perished, and he had lost his eyesight. And yet he wrote, "My Jesus, as thou wilt," and he said that whatever came, he could still sing of God's love. That Lutheran minister had stood as hard a test as often falls to the lot of man.

We have come in our six months' study of the life of Christ to a hard time in his life. Where is the scene?

Continue with Explanations and Comments.

Obeying God at Any Cost. Jesus was obedient. He obeyed fully, perfectly, all his life. It was the joy of his heart and life to obey his Father. The commonplaceness of Nazareth mattered not if only the Father's voice said "in whom I am well pleased." The sharpness of the Wilderness conflict, the daily duelling with Jerusalem leaders, the agony of Gethsemane, the awful experience of Calvary, were gladly accepted and even rejoiced in, for they came in the path of obedience to the Father's will.

His obedience was intelligent and full. And the keenness of that remarkable intellect of his—I am speaking of him just now as a Man—all the strength of his tremendous will, all the love of his great heart, were brought to bear on this—obedience to the Father's will.

That implies several things underlying the obedience. It meant a trained ear; an ear trained by listening, trained by study of the Old Testament Scripture, trained by prayer, yes, trained by obedience; for disobedience, failure to obey, dulls and deafens the ear. It meant study of the Word of God. So there came to be the clear understanding of the Father's plan. It meant a discerning mind, a simple, sane sense. Don't forget the perfect humanness of our divine Lord. He learned his Father's will as we may learn it—by studying the Word.

Through prayer there came the intelligent understanding of the Word of God. Through prayer there came the grace that enabled him to obey.

And obedience meant a choosing to obey. There was not simply the general choice to obey. But as the Father's plan grew in his consciousness bit by bit, he chose to obey at each advancing step. As he drew on nearer, step by step, to Gethsemane and Calvary, as there came in upon him with terrible realness just what obedience meant, of pain and shame, he chose to obey.—Condensed from Quiet Talks about the Tempter, by S. D. Gordon.

Knowing and Doing God's Will. Twelve hundred years ago the boys in Europe were greatly excited by what they heard of the way the Turks treated Christians in Palestine. They had seen many companies of soldiers start for the Holy Land, and they knew that these Crusaders, as they were called, had fought many a battle with the Turks. Why could not they, too, go and take the Holy Land away from the Turks? "It is the will of God," their motto said. A French boy named Stephen gathered an army of thirty thousand French children, a German boy named Nicholas led twenty thousand German children, and another German boy, whose very name has been forgotten, collected another band twenty thousand strong. The Children's Crusade started on the errand of God, as they thought it, but of course it was madness to think that God really wished them to fight grown men. They did not even reach Palestine. Some of them reached the Mediterranean. Two shiploads of children were lost at sea, several shiploads were sold as slaves in Egypt many thousands died by the way, and a few succeeded in getting back home again.

They thought that going to Jerusalem to fight was the way in which they could best serve and obey God. Theirs was a mad undertaking, of course, but we like to think of their eagerness to do God's will at whatever cost.

When you think of doing God's will, do you perhaps think of meeting aright some great crisis in your lives, of doing some wonderful deed, or of bearing some great sorrow? The truth is, that God wants us to do his will in every little, nameless deed and trifling act. And do you wonder how you may know what is God's will for you in such things? The way to know that will is to see it fulfilled in Christ's life.

It is Faber who said that the surest method of arriving at a knowledge of God's eternal purposes about us is to be found in the right use of the present moment, that each hour comes with some little fagot of God's will fastened upon its back.

Lincoln's Determination. To a deputation from all the denominations of Chicago, September 13, 1862, Lincoln said: "I hope that it will not be irreverent for me to say that if it is probable that God would reveal his will to others, upon a point so connected with my duty, it might be supposed that he would reveal it directly to me: for unless I am more deceived in myself than I often am, it is my earnest desire to know the will of Providence in this matter, and if I can learn what it is I will do it."

Thy Will Be Done.

"I cannot always know and understand
The Master's rule;
I cannot always do the tasks he gives
In life's hard school;
But I am learning, with his help, to solve
Them one by one,
And when I cannot understand, to say—
'Thy will be done.'"

Sentence Sermons. He enters into temptation who neglects to pray.—Jerome.

To do thy will is more than praise
As words are less than deeds.—Whittier.

That's best
Which God sends. 'Twas his will: it is mine.—Owen Meredith.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What had the multitude cried on the day of the Triumphal Entry? 2. What has happened in the few days between that and the crucifixion? 3. What was the nature of Jesus' kingship? 4. What does the word "ghost" in the last sentence of our text mean? 5. What did Jesus say his death would accomplish, as recorded in Jn. 12.32, 33?

LESSON X—JUNE 7

JESUS CRUCIFIED

GOLDEN TEXT: He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. Isaiah 53.5.

LESSON Luke 23 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 53.7-12

Luke 23.33 And when they came unto the place which is called the skull, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left. 34 And Jesus said, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And parting his garments among them, they cast lots. 35 And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also scoffed at him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if this is the Christ of God, his chosen. 36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, offering him vinegar, 37 and saying, If thou art the King of the Jews, save thyself. 38 And there was also a superscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

39 And one of the malefactors that were hanged railed on him, saying, Art not thou the Christ? save thyself and us. 40 But the other answered, and rebuking him said, Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42 And he said, Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom. 43 And he said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise.

44 And it was now about the sixth hour, and a darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, 45 the sun's light failing: and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. 46 And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said this, he gave up the ghost.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. Christ before Pilate, verses 1-6.

II. Christ before Herod, verses 7-12.

III. Sentenced by Pilate, verses 13-25.

IV. Led away to Be Crucified, verses 26-32.

V. The Crucifixion, verses 33, 34. We call the knoll where Jesus was crucified Calvary, from the Latin word "calvaris," a skull. There he was nailed to a cross, and on either side of him a malefactor was hung to intensify the ignominy of his crucifixion. The four soldiers who crucified him, after dividing his garments among them (the headdress, the shoes, the outer robe and the girdle were distributed "to every soldier a part," Jn. 19.23, 24), cast lots for the possession of the seamless inner robe. And then they sat and watching him there (Mt. 27.36), to make sure that he was not rescued. There is a remarkable picture by William Blake which depicts the three crosses from behind. No form of Christ can be seen. The soldiers are casting their dice for his garments, but they have gone behind the cross to do this. Light emanating from the central cross illuminates the other crosses and the soldiers. Thus the artist has sought to depict the victory of the tragedy.

> And sitting down, they watched him there,
> The soldiers did,
> There, while they played with dice,
> He made his sacrifice,
> And died upon the cross to rid
> God's world of sin.
> He was a gambler, too, my Christ,
> He took his life and threw
> It for a world redeemed.
> And ere his agony was done,
> Before the westering sun went down,
> Crowning that day with crimson crown,
> He knew that he had won (G. A. Studdert Kennedy).

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," were the beautiful words of the Savior spoken not only of the soldiers who had merely obeyed

orders, but seemingly also of the Jews who had brought about his crucifixion but had not realized the enormity of their guilt. His prayer exemplifies the spirit which he had tried to inculcate in his followers when he bade them love their enemies, and do good to them that despitefully used them. "Think of the generous heart of the dying Savior who could actually try to find an excuse—not merely forgive—not merely pray for—but actually try to find something to say in their favor. There was very little that could be said, but he looked for it and said it. Their prejudices, their upbringing, their ignorance about him. They did not know what they were doing. If they realized it, they would not do it. Father, forgive!" (J. Paterson-Smyth).

VI. The Taunts of the Spectators, verses 35-37. And the people stood beholding. And the rulers did not scorn to join the rabble in their mockery (Mt. 27.39, 40): "He saved others," they cried; "let him save himself, if this is the Christ of God, his chosen." Note their admission that he saved others! "They intended scorn, they gave praise. As the crown of thorns became the Master's glory, so their mocking contempt became a Hallelujah. It is the glory of Christ that he could not save himself if he would save others" (Lyman Abbott). And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, offering him vinegar, and saying, "If thou art the King of the Jews, save thyself," thus echoing the taunt of the Jewish rulers.

> "Let me listen, not as judge, but as one who has been in the company of the callous crowd. For I, too, have mocked him! I have said, 'Hail, King!' and I have bowed before him, but it has been mock and empty homage! I have sung, 'Crown him Lord of all!' but there has been no real recognition of his sovereignty; mine has been a mock coronation. From the seat of the mocker, deliver me, Lord!" (J. H. Jowett).

VII. The Superscription on the Cross, verse 38. And there was also a superscription over him: "This is the King of the Jews." It was customary to affix to the cross an inscription telling the crime the one crucified had committed. Pilate could ascribe no crime to Jesus, therefore he had this inscription written so as to annoy the priests who, as he expected, considered it an insult to themselves: see Jn. 19.21, 22. The inscription was written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek (Jn. 19.20) that all who passed by might read it, for these were the languages spoken throughout the then civilized world.

> "Christ missed being King of the Jews in order that he might be King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (James Stalker).

VIII. The Conversation with the Malefactors, verses 39-43. "Art not thou the Christ?" sneered one of the wretched men who was crucified with Jesus. "Save thyself and us," he cried. But the other man rebuked his comrade in crime. "Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" he exclaimed and then, in the midst of his agonizing suffering, he had the grace not only to confess his sins but acknowledge the justice of his punishment as he added: "And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss."

The Superscription on the Cross

Then turning to Jesus, the penitent thief cried, "Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom." His faith has been extolled in extravagant terms. "His faith surpassed that of the patriarchs and prophets, even of the Father of the Faithful himself," declared St. Augustine. "This poor fellow saw Christ numbered among the transgressors, yet prayed to him as if he were in glory: on the cross he worshiped him as though he, as God, sat in heaven; he saw him condemned, but he invoked him as the King!"

In response to that great cry of faith, Jesus said, "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." "Today, what speed; with me, what company; in Paradise, what rest!" (Bossuet).

IX. The Death, verses 44-46. For three hours there was darkness and the veil of the temple—the curtain between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies—was torn in two. "The darkened skies were a fit symbol of the blackest crime in all the history of man. The rending of the temple veil was a type of the 'new and living way' opened into the presence of God for all believers. Thus these two signs correspond to the human and the divine aspects of this atoning death, and indicate the heinousness of sin and the purpose of redeeming grace" (Charles R. Erdman).

"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." This is another saying from the cross which only Luke records. The Greek word here translated "commend" is in other passages (for example, in Tim. 1.12) translated "commit": the two words were synonymous in older English. Except the word Father, the saying is a quotation from Ps. 31.5: it is repeated to this day by many Jewish children as part of their evening prayer. "In the humble home at Nazareth one might have heard Mary teaching the child Jesus to repeat the words as evening by evening he lay down in the happy rest of childhood. And now, in the last twilight, closing life's heavy-laden day, it is with the prayer of his childhood still upon his lips that he betakes himself to the last repose."

"Such was the faith in which the Lord Jesus met and conquered Death; and only he can make us partakers of that faith. Science and philosophy, all the best teachers of our race, apart from Christ, are vague and cheerless as to that last voyage, in which, once we quit the shore, no star will guide us back. The religion of Christ is the only religion to live in and to die in. By his own calm faith in the very article of death Christ bids us trust our Father in death and for what comes after death as much as for the morrow. If you trust, you trust. You cannot draw a line on this side of which you will trust but beyond which you will not. You cannot trust, really trust, a man for five dollars and be unable to trust him for ten. You cannot thus both trust and distrust your fellow-man. Nor can you trust God for the morrow and not trust him for the day after, for a hundred or a thousand years hence, for all eternity. 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' By that word Jesus Christ says to us: 'If you have known the Father, if you have trusted him in life, you cannot but trust him in death. You cannot drift beyond his love and care. You cannot take too hopeful a view of what is to come after this mortal life. Joyfully commit all to the Father. In his house there are many mansions, and there, as here, he will give the most and the best you are capable of receiving" (Robert Law).

And having said this, he gave up the ghost.

"Through his life and triumphant death, and through the living energy of the Spirit, we share in the redeeming love which overcomes evil, and find forgiveness, freedom and eternal life" (Statement of the Student Christian Movement of England).

On a crucifix in an eastern monastery these words are inscribed: "Tot pro te: quot pro me?"—This much on thy account: how much on mine?

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The time of the crucifixion was from nine in the morning till three in the afternoon of Friday, April 7, A.D. 30. The traditional site was beneath the present Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Outside the city wall on the north, not far from St. Stephen's Gate, is a knoll called "Gordon's Calvary," which many modern scholars believe to have been where the crucifixion took place. Two great roads from Joppa and Damascus crossed near by, and multitudes of pilgrims and travelers could stop to see the spectacle.

"The traditional site of the cross and the tomb have been hallowed for over fifteen centuries in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Let the visitor go there as to one of the most interesting places in Christendom with a continuous tradition from the days of Constantine the Great three hundred years after the crucifixion, and made sacred by the prayers and vows of innumerable pilgrims, but let him not go there as to the assured site of either crucifixion or

resurrection. No one knows where that site is, and doubtless no one ever will.

"The more often I visited the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the more grateful I was that we are not compelled to think of the Master's cross and tomb as being there. Let the visitor, some high day in Lent, go there and see! Five services are on at once—the Greek Orthodox, the Roman Catholic, the Armenian, the Jacobite Syrian, and the Coptic. In gorgeous, ecclesiastical vestments the five sets of churchmen parade the sanctuary, chanting, genuflecting, ringing bells.

"These five possess monopoly of the church and no others are allowed to hold public worship there. So jealous are they of their rights in this carefully districted sanctuary, where none may overstep his privileges by a single inch, that within the memory of my friends in Jerusalem a riot broke out and two men were killed because a Greek had swept one more step of an outer stairway than was his right to sweep. Even under British rule, while there have been no deaths, there has been bloodshed here, and Moslem soldiers still keep guard over the competing Christians."—Harry Emerson Fosdick.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

An assistant of Dr. Robert W. Dale of Birmingham, England, was preparing a sermon upon the Atonement. He was not satisfied with his explanation of how the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross saves from sin, and besought Dr. Dale's help. All teachers may wisely follow the counsel which Dr. Dale gave him. "Give up troubling, my friend," he said, "about how it was possible for God to forgive sins and tell them straight that Christ died for their sins. It is the fact that people want to know, and not your theory, nor mine, as to how it was or is possible."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

LOVE'S SUPREME SACRIFICE

Beginning the Lesson.

"Speak, History! who are life's victors?
Unroll the long annals, and say—
Are they those whom the world called the victors—
Who won the success of a day?
The Martyrs, or Nero? The Spartans
Who fell at Thermopylæ's tryst,
Or the Persians and Xerxes? His
Judges, or Socrates? Pilate, or Christ?"

"An old Greek philosopher—the wisest of his race—nearly four centuries before Christ, drew from his imagination a picture of the ideal righteous man. [It is J. B. Lightfoot who recalls this.] It was an essential feature in the portrait that he should be misrepresented and misunderstood; that, though righteous, he should be considered unrighteous; that he should meet with obloquy and persecution and shame; last of all—a strange, instinctive prophecy—he was to die on the gibbet. The old philosopher rightly divined it was essential that the ideal man should fail, utterly fail, in life. Christ's perfection could only be manifested by entire failure. This failure is the most brilliant jewel in his heavenly crown; the richest portion of the inheritance which he has bequeathed to us."

It seemed as though his life had gone for nought,—
Nothing to show for that long battle fought,
But a pale prisoner to the gibbet brought;—
But God saw otherwise!

No lasting good seemed ever like to come
Of all his sowing,—neither fruit nor bloom,
Instead—a felon's cross, an alien tomb;—
But God saw otherwise!

We too, at times, come nigh to lose our hope.
When with life's evils we no more can cope,
And in the dark with heavy hearts we grope;
But God sees otherwise.—John Oxenham.

The Joy of the Cross. In Clare Sheridan's Russian Diary there is a strik-

ing passage which defines what I mean by the joy of the idealist. She knew and experienced all the privations and perils inseparable from life in a country broken by revolution, the absence of all comfort, menial toils and hourly peril; and she writes, "There may be no food for the body, but there is plenty of food for the soul; and I would rather live in discomfort, in an atmosphere of gigantic effort, than in luxury among the purposeless." There speaks the true idealist. Luxury among the purposeless appears to her the meanest form of human existence, but there is something that thrills and uplifts the soul in a gigantic effort for social redemption, however mistaken its methods and disappointing its results. Have we felt that thrill, that self-forgetting rapture of an endeavor set on ends that transcend the aims of the personal life?"

Jesus knew it. This was for him the joy of the cross. He had had a definite ideal for which he lived: "For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the Truth." And so his end was joyous; he had a joy that Pilate could not take from him, nor all the infamy of the cross destroy. Men did not see it at the time. They thought of Palm Sunday as his day of triumph, and Good Friday as the day of his irretrievable disaster. But later on, when they read the history with a truer wisdom, they knew that the day on which Jesus gave all he was and all he had for the redemption of mankind, was the real hour of his triumph. And for all of us the true triumph is found, not in the facile hosannas of the mob, but in the approval God gives to the soul that, scorning luxury among the purposeless, has kept its faith, fought the good fight, and finished its course with joy.—From a Sermon, by W. J. Dawson.

What Does it Cost God and Us? Is our religion costing God enough? Is it a religion which really doesn't bother God? Most of us live our lives without being a particular tax on the king of England, or, if we are Americans, on the president of the United States. Do we live our lives on the same basis with regard to God, that we do not ask big things of him, do not expect him to do much?

The great feature, or one of the great features, of the Christian religion is that it asks more of a man than any other religion, and it asks a great deal more of God. How much does a religion expect God to do? There are religions of savages in which all that is really asked of God is that he will go away and let the people alone. The Christian religion has always been associated with a tremendous demand on God. It has always been thought out in terms of the incarnation. It is a religion that is associated with God in Christ. And I put it this way: Does our religion require anything so big and wonderful as God in Christ? If it does not, it is not the Christian religion. The more one thinks of God in Christ the more illumination one reaches, the more one will get. A great many of us have doubts about God in Christ, because it is the wrong God we are thinking about. Our religion has not cost us enough in thought. It is not the God of Jesus Christ we are thinking about, it is a composite god of all sorts of things, who could not be incarnate in anything because, besides being made up of broken fragments of all sorts of things, he is not particularly alive. And Jesus teaches us of a God who is alive, and who gives himself on the scale of Christ to be measured by the cross.

Now I ask, Do we really need a religion that costs God so much? Many of us can manage, we say, with a cheaper universe than that. If we are satisfied with anything less than that we are missing reality in some way; it means that we have been screened from temptation, or surrendered to it to such a point that we do not notice it; that we are screened from the real needs of men; that we have shut our eyes to the difficulty of character; that we have shut our eyes to the misery of men and women in our own land, in Europe, in India; that we are living in a world that is unreal. People who live in the real world, with their eyes open to all the realities, need all the God that they can get to keep sane and to keep sweet, to work, to hold, to trust. They need God in Christ reconciling the world to himself.

Now, say what you like about the old Evangelicalism, with its catch-words and its conceptions, there is always this about it, it always put the cost of man's salvation at the very highest point. It cost God in Christ the cross.

And by asking ourselves how much the cross means to us, we can find whether our religion is real or not. Is your own salvation real? And by your own salvation I do not mean your rescue from an eventual hell about which you may be doubtful; I mean by your salvation your development. I think the thing that haunts us all with shame and regret, and sometimes with penitence, is this, that we are of so little use to men and women, so ineffectual in dealing with the burdens and sorrows and sins of men. We cannot touch them and help them. We cannot transform things. And as one gets older, the sense of that failure grows. Yes, we are conscious of that. The gospel message is: "I am come that you might have life, and overflow with it." If you take the text in the old translation, you miss the meaning of it. What it means is this: a God who gives himself to us in such a way that our poor natures are so filled with his vitality that wherever we go our touch brings life, our very presence shall bring life, that men shall see us and live.

We are called to have the most wonderful, the most costly, the most precious religion in the world, the religion of God in Christ reconciling the world to himself, the religion of the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us.—T. R. Glover.

A Cross-Bearing Christianity. At least half the meaning of the cross is that you and I should not grudge our very life's blood in the service of our fellows. We were never more true to the spirit of the Man of Nazareth than when, without ceasing to put the sign of his cross on our altars, we began to put it also on our ambulance wagons; and to paint it on little buildings in our slums where men of brilliant natural endowment were giving up their lives in the effort to redeem their bruised and fallen brothers, or on little huts in the African jungle where a like work of redemption was being done for men of another race. Surely Christ would have recognized all such work as being of one piece with his own, and even, as St. Paul says, "as filling up that which is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of his body, the Community." "To preach the gospel to the poor, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised"—in reading these words from Isaiah in the synagogue at Nazareth Jesus was laying down the program, not alone for his own future ministry, but for all true Christian service. And, when it came to the last, he did not bear his cross without reminding those who gathered about him that they could not become his disciples by merely leaning on his cross and showing no willingness to bear their own. Too often the temptation of Christians has been, in the poignant words of a recent writer, to leave it all "to one great priestly act, one baptism, one cup of woe, though at the heart of all our worship are the words, 'Drink ye all of it.' "—John Baillie, in The Place of Jesus Christ in Modern Christianity.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. The teaching and example of Jesus about forgiveness.

2. What does the crucifixion of Jesus mean to us? How are we proving this?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How many of the appearances of Christ after his resurrection can you recall? 2. What to you proves the truth of the resurrection? 3. How did the resurrection transform the disciples? 4. What is the meaning of the resurrection? 5. Where does Luke again tell the story of the ascension? (Acts 1.) 6. Why did the two not recognize Jesus on the way to Emmaus? 7. What is the meaning of the ascension?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHAT WE OWE TO THE LORD JESUS

Beginning the Lesson. Assyrian kings in Old Testament times boasted of impaling men on stakes and of skinning them alive. It is believed that it was the Assyrians who were responsible for the introduction of crucifixion into the Mediterranean world. The Romans did not adopt it till after the time of Julias Cæsar, and then in Italy only as punishment for crimes against the State or in the case of slaves, but they did not hesitate to use it in the case of the despised Jesus.

There was a sentence in the law of the Jews which called down a special

curse upon him who "hung upon a tree," and this was the death which his enemies contrived for Jesus. How did they bring it about?

"They have laid him unresisting upon that rough black cross. Through his hands and feet they drive the cruel spikes. Now by combined effort the cross is lifted up and dropped into its socket, tearing through nerve and muscle in the merciless shock. And the Son of God in his awful pain is looking forth—on the fair city that has cast him out to die, and the soldiers at his feet throwing dice for his clothes, and the priests brutally exulting in their victory, and the holiday crowd out to see the spectacle. The world in miniature is there before him—the world for which he is dying.

"'And the world knew him not.' One day it shall know. And the meaning of it all. And down through the centuries that horrible black cross, emblem of shame and ignominy unspeakable, shall be the sign of the noblest thought that has ever touched humanity, the emblem of the self-sacrifice of God."

Performing "Migawari." When Dr. Neesima was president of the Doshisha University in Kyoto there came a time of great disturbance, teachers and students being at odds. One morning Neesima came to chapel with a cane in his hand. Paul Kanamori, the Japanese Evangelist, tells the story of what happened.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I am sorry to see such a disturbance in the school. It is a disgrace to Doshisha. But, as such a disturbance has arisen, we must punish the person or persons who are responsible for it. So this morning I will punish the offender."

Of course everybody supposed he was going to punish the ringleaders of the rioting. But he continued to speak.

"But, gentlemen, I cannot lay this responsibility upon any of the students, nor upon any of the teachers. Upon whom, then, shall it fall? I will tell you. The person who is wholly responsible for this great disturbance in Doshisha is Joseph Neesima, its president. It is the duty of a president to govern his school and keep it in good order. Now this President Neesima has failed to preserve order in his school; he has failed in the discharge of his duty. This great disturbance in Doshisha has not only brought great misfortune upon the students and has given great trouble to the teachers, but it has brought disgrace upon this institution. The whole responsibility must be laid upon the president. He must bear it and he must be punished."

As he finished he began to strike his left hand with all his might, again and again. He struck so hard that finally the cane broke into three pieces. His hand began to bleed and the whole school was taken aback. One of the students rushed up to the president's side, and seizing his arm began to cry, "Oh, my teacher! My teacher!"

Teachers and students all burst into tears and wept aloud. It was a wonderful sight indeed. The president with his hand bleeding and the whole school weeping!

Why did he punish himself? He had had nothing whatever to do with the uprising, and the whole school knew it. There was no need for explanation. Every one knew that he was performing "Migawari"—substituting himself for his students. They transgressed the laws of the school. And transgressions must be punished. But Dr. Neesima was not simply a president, an administrator of the school. He was a father to his students, loving them as his own children. How could he punish his beloved children? He chose to be wounded for their transgressions; to take upon himself the chastisement for their sins.

By this act of love the hearts of the erring students were entirely changed. "We are ready to give our lives, if need be, for such a president," they said.

Whence do you think Dr. Neesima obtained such a loving heart? Whence did he get this idea of substitution? From the cross of Christ.

A Faint Suggestion of the Savior's Love. Among the charming stories written by S. R. Crockett is one of the days of Henry of Navarre, the greatest of the French kings. One of the characters in The White Plume is a Scotch-Spanish girl, Claire Agnew, who, because of her Calvinistic faith and for other reasons, had fallen under the ban of the Inquisition, that terrible and infernal institution of the Spanish Jesuits. A band of rough men had been sent secretly to compass the young girl's arrest and carry her across the

border. Claire Agnew had won the love of a noble French youth, although as yet no word of troth had passed between them. This youth determined to deliver the maid from peril. Without her knowledge he secured her mantle and disguising himself in it, he had himself arrested in her place and taken into Spain, where his identity was not discovered until he stood before the awful and hated tribunal. He was tortured, thrown into the horror chamber of "the Eyes," where he almost lost his reason, and at last was condemned to service as a galley-slave where, chained to the weary oar, he toiled through the long hot days and sleepless nights, in the worst of bondage.

In the meantime the girl had made her escape to a place of safety, but she suspected that all was not well with her lover, and by close questioning she at last forced from the old man who was protecting her the true story of her lover's devotion. Then flashing her "wet, splendid eyes" on the old man, and abandoning herself to the rapture of the thought of a love that had suffered so much for her, she cried: "And all this he did for me, simply because he loved me, and he did it without my knowing it, and he did it knowing that I did not know it!"

Give that story infinite measures and let it have an eternal accent, and we shall at least begin to have some faint suggestion of the length and breadth and height and depth of the devotion of the Savior's compassion, which passeth knowledge.—James I. Vance, in Tendency.

The One Big Question for Us. Beth's eyes were filled with tears as she laid down the newspaper one day years ago. "Oh, Aunt Nan!" she cried. "Isn't it frightful to read about all this suffering and sacrifice and bloodshed? And how can Mrs. Bates bear up so calmly now that Tom is wounded? Why, I felt badly enough, when the news came, just because I'd always known him—and she's his mother!"

Aunt Nan surveyed her niece slowly for a moment before she answered. "My dear," she said then, "I have just been to see Mrs. Bates. She told me something that Tom said to her just before he left home. He hadn't often spoken about religious matters—even to her. But he was telling her about his enlisting, and he said this:

" 'Mother, I've thought a good many times about a talk our minister gave one Communion Sunday. He said that when we were remembering how Christ's body had been broken and his blood shed—and what for—we wanted to remember one other thing, too: that our bodies were being broken and our blood shed every day of our lives, even if it were only bit by bit and drop by drop. And he wanted us all to ask ourselves whether it was for anything worth while. That's worried me sometimes, mother, when I've got to thinking about what most folks' lives amount to in the long run. And that's one thing about this war—whatever sacrifice a fellow's called on to make, he'll know that it's for something that's worth it. His life won't be dribbling away on a lot of junk as it might here at home.'

"So that, you see, Beth, is why she can bear up 'so calmly' as you say, when her son is wounded—perhaps dying. Because she knows that whatever happens he's satisfied with the answer to the one big question of his life."

Beth's eyes were still misty, but they shone now behind the tears. "Oh, thank you, Aunt Nan!" she said softly, "you've made me understand—and see—as I never did before. The suffering and the sorrow and the sacrifice aren't the most important things after all, are they, big as they seem? The one big question, as you call it, is the thing that counts most."—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons. Because of what Christ did he has a right to dominate every one of us.—John R. Mott.

There is but one result that can warrant the agony of Calvary, and that is our being conquerors over sin.—Mark Guy Pearse.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How many days between the crucifixion and the resurrection? 2. What ideas about Christ and his work did the two men have? 3. Why did Jesus quote from the Old Testament instead of from the New? 4. What is the meaning of "behooved"? 5. What does "their eyes were holden" mean? 6. Who earlier than these two men had failed to recognize the Risen Christ, and why? (Jn. 20.15)

LESSON XI—JUNE 14

THE RESURRECTION AND THE ASCENSION

GOLDEN TEXT: It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Romans 8.34.

LESSON Luke 24 DEVOTIONAL READING 1 Corinthians 15.50-58

Luke 24.25 And he said unto them, O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory? 27 And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. 28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they were going: and he made as though he would go further. 29 And they constrained him, saying, Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent. And he went in to abide with them. 30 And it came to pass, when he had sat down with them to meat, he took the bread and blessed; and breaking "it" he gave to them. 31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. 32 And they said one to another, Was not our heart burning within us, while he spake to us in the way, while he opened to us the scriptures? 33 And they rose up that very hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, 34 saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. 35 And they rehearsed the things "that happened" in the way, and how he was known of them in the breaking of the bread.

36 And as they spake these things, he himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace "be" unto you. 37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit. 38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do questionings arise in your heart? 39 See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having. 40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.

50 And he led them out until "they were" over against Bethany: and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. 51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Empty Tomb Seen by Three Women and by Peter, verses 1-12.

II. The Interview on the Way to Emmaus, verses 13-31. On the day of Christ's resurrection, two of his disciples (not apostles) were on their way to the village of Emmaus, seven and a half miles from Jerusalem. Disillusioned and disheartened, they were talking over the sad events of the last few days, when Jesus drew near and walked on with them. But "their eyes were holden that they should not know him." "Holden" is the archaic form of "held." They were absorbed in their sorrow; they were not expecting to see Jesus; and Jesus' appearance was evidently changed, Luke 24.37; Mk. 16.12; Jn. 20.14, 15; 21.4. Jesus began to question them and to lead them to unburden their troubled hearts. "What communications are these that ye have one with another?" he asked.

> "Would I like my Lord and Master to overhear all my conversations with friends who go beside me on life's way? If he were to break in suddenly on some of my talks, and say, 'What manner of communications are these that ye have one with another?' how ashamed before him I would sometimes feel! Dare I allow myself, in even an intimate conversation, to utter anything—any bitter word, any untruthful slander, any ungenerous remark—which it would cover me with confusion to think he had overheard? Must I not set a watch upon my lips?" (G. H. Knight).

"Dost thou alone sojourn in Jerusalem and not know the things that are come to pass there in these days?" they returned in astonishment. "They meant that this itinerant stranger must be very much out of it indeed" (Dan Crawford). "What things?" asked Jesus.

"Eight vital facts they told him: (1) of a Jesus the Nazarene, which means,

word for word, a Savior of the worst, for 'Nazarene' meant the latter, and 'Jesus' the former. Then (2) they named him mighty in deed and word, for his walk ever squared with his talk. Also (3) all this because it was before God, first of all, then all the people afterwards. Now comes (4) his being sentenced to die and he died, but more than Christ died that day; for (5) there died also many a Hebrew hope that it was he who should redeem Israel. Further, and sorrowingly, they seem (6) to roll up a second stone to his tomb in the dark down-to-zero words, And besides all this, it is now the third day since these things came to pass. Then (7: it ought to be the perfect number, and it is!) certain women amazed us, saying he was alive! Lastly, (8) certain of our own company (we did not go, but they did!) went to the sepulcher and found the facts fitted to the woman's version" (Dan Crawford).

"O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!" exclaimed Jesus at the end of their recital. Behooved it not, was it not fitting for, the Christ, the Messiah, to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory? "The disciples had thought only of the prediction of the glory, and not also of the suffering of the Messiah." The cross had spelled, not failure, but success.

And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. "The law contained what were regarded as Messianic predictions, such as Gen. 3.15; 22.18; Num. 24.17; Dt. 18.15; and types, the scapegoat, the manna, the brazen serpent, the sacrifices generally. The writer does not mean that Jesus began from Moses and the prophets, and then went on to other writings such as the Psalms, but that, beginning from Moses, he quoted from all the prophets" (A. E. Garvie).

Death by crucifixion was the most ignoble death that could befall any one, in the opinion of the Jews of Jesus' day. The cross was to them a stumbling block: he who died on the cross could not have been the Messiah. Hence Jesus explained to these disciples the necessity for the cross and the glory of the cross, demonstrating from the Scriptures that the very facts which they thought disproved his title of Messiah, in reality made good his claim.

"If the two went slowly before for weariness, the three go more slowly now for interest and eagerness! What pauses under the shade of some olive-tree, what stoppings in the path while some difficult point is being elucidated, what slackening of pace as Emmaus is being reached!"

On approaching Emmaus, Jesus "made as though" he would continue on his way. This was not pretence on his part, for had they not by their entreaties constrained him to stay, he would have gone on. "Abide with us," they begged; "for it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent." At the evening meal Jesus offered the customary grace before partaking of the food, and then he broke the bread and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew him. Perhaps the familiar words spoken by the familiar voice, or a familiar gesture in the breaking of the bread (verse 35) revealed him to them. At that moment he vanished out of their sight, leaving them with the rapturous knowledge that they had seen the Risen Christ. And they recalled how their hearts had burned within them as he talked with them on the way.

III. The Interview Reported to the Disciples, verses 33-35. They hastened that very hour to Jerusalem and found the eleven disciples and others with them, lost in amazement over the good news which they had heard: "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon."

> "No one more needs a vision of the living Christ than the man who had denied him. Where Jesus found his penitent follower, whose heart was crushed with remorse, we do not know, nor are we told what words of confession and forgiveness were there exchanged; but of this we are sure, it is possible for every one who feels the shame and disgrace of disloyalty to Christ to meet with him alone today and to receive from him pardon and peace" (Charles R. Erdman).

Then the two in their turn told what had happened on the way to Emmaus and how they had recognized Christ as he supped with them and broke the bread.

IV. The Appearance of Christ, verses 36-43. While the Emmaus pilgrims were recounting to the eleven disciples their wonderful talk with the Risen

Lord, he himself suddenly appeared in their midst and said, "Peace be unto you." That was the customary form of greeting. Notwithstanding what they had just heard, they were greatly terrified, for they supposed they beheld a spirit, that is, "a form recognizable as that of Jesus, but of Jesus not risen but come from the world of the dead disembodied or only with an apparent body."

"Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do questionings arise in your heart?" Jesus asked; and then to reassure them, to convince them that he was not a disembodied spirit, he bade them see and touch his hands and his feet. "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me bearing," he told them. "The resurrection body could evidently offer resistance to the touch; but its nature escapes our conception" (A. E. Garvie).

While they still disbelieved for joy ("a curious, yet real state of mind"), he asked for something to eat, and when they gave him a piece of a broiled fish he ate before them. One commentator suggests that, as the materiality thus evinced seems inconsistent with the pneumatic nature of Christ's body, as suggested by sudden appearing and disappearing, the materiality was assumed by Jesus for the moment to satisfy the disciples that he had a body and that he was risen.

V. The Parting Words of Christ, verses 44-49. Luke's narrative reads as if all these farewell words of Jesus were spoken at that Easter evening meeting with the eleven, but in Acts 1.3 Luke tells us that Christ "showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the Kingdom of God." Read Mt. 28.16-20; Mk. 16.14-18; Jn. 20.24 to 21.23.

"These are my words," said Jesus. What words? "As they stand in Luke's narrative the sense must be: These events (death and resurrection) fulfill the words I spoke to you before my death" (Expositor's Greek Testament). He had told them that what was written in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms concerning him would be fulfilled. "The law, the prophets, and the Psalms" stand for the three divisions of the Old Testament Canon recognized by the Jews.

Then opened he their minds, that they might understand the Scriptures; and the facts which he impressed upon their minds are luminous with truths which are needed by the disciples of Christ today. "Among them are such facts as these: The Scriptures contain authoritative messages concerning Christ; these messages can be understood only by those who believe in Christ, and are guided by him; the essential truths concerning Christ center in the facts of his death and resurrection; in witness of the salvation thus secured, repentance and forgiveness of sins can be preached; this salvation is to be proclaimed in all the world; the followers of Christ are the messengers by whom this good news is to be made known; the power for such proclamation is imparted by the Spirit of Christ who was manifested in new power on the Day of Pentecost, and who is now an abiding Presence and a Source of limitless strength to all who seek to do the will of Christ and to glorify his name" (C. R. Erdman).

"Behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you," that is, the Holy Spirit, Acts 1.4; "but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high."

> This power from on high is usually thought of as a sudden acquisition, but is it not rather a steady accumulation? He who constantly waits upon God, who tarries in the Upper Room, becomes equipped for Christian service.

VI. The Ascension, verses 50-53. At last came the final farewell. Read Luke's fuller account of this in Acts 1.6-12. Jesus led his disciples out of the city, over the old familiar route which they had last taken with him on the night of the betrayal. Out through the Eastern gate, across the brook Kidron, up the farther side of the valley and past the Garden of Gethsemane until they stood upon the Mount of Olives over against Bethany. There with his hands uplifted in blessing he parted from them and ascended—was admitted into the presence of God. "An end had come. But what was the end? A blossom's end is fruit, a seed's end is harvest. The river finds its end in the sea of waters, and the life of Jesus found its end in God, in spirit, immortality, hope!" (J. Morgan Gibbon).

"There is a simple child notion of the ascension of his body passing through earth's atmosphere into the ether beyond and then on and on through infinite spaces to the throne of the Eternal Heavens. It is a child notion. Literally conceived it leads to childish questions: Is Heaven a place, or a state of being? Is it a place in some fixed local direction? How can there be any Above or Below on a planet constantly revolving? But our child notion, though a misapprehension, is not so bad for a rough working idea—a simple symbol of the truth which the ascension represents, that the Lord in his spiritual body was passing into the invisible order, returning to that sphere of being from which he came. We believe that the visible event which we call the ascension was his kindly condescension to simple human minds. We naturally connect that higher life which is beyond our present comprehension with the blue heavens above, or the starry heights beyond the blue. In concession to this simple thought, instead of just disappearing as at other times, he rose from the earth and a cloud received him. It only meant that he had passed from our present sphere of existence to another sphere beyond our own" (J. Paterson-Smyth).

"Hid somewhere underfoot in the heart of this rock-crusted globe is the seat of the power called gravitation which holds man's body down. Anchored in the hidden heart of God above is the attraction which controls the spirit and commands and orders home a liberated humanity when it slips the leash of matter and goes free" (William V. Kelly).

And in his glory the disciples rejoiced. They returned to Jerusalem, and at the hours of worship were always in the temple, blessing God. It is often remarked that a writer of fiction would have made the disciples lament the departure of their Lord. Six weeks earlier, when Jesus told them plainly that he was soon to leave them, their hearts were filled with sorrow. There is no way in which we can account for this reversal of their feeling except by the fact that they were assured Christ had been victorious over death and the grave. Paul had caught the ascension joy when he wrote the words of our Golden Text.

"Some of you may remember the striking scene in Faust, where Faust is about to commit suicide. The cup of poison is in his hand; he is moving it to his lips, when on his ears falls the sound of the Easter hymns singing of the risen Christ. The sound and the recollections that it stirs recall him, and he is saved. But in that song which is put into the mouth of the disciples, Goethe seems to me to have made one great mistake. He makes the disciples praise the victory of Christ, but bewail their own fortune, as left behind to suffer on earth:

He with the Creator,
God's joyance may share:
We on earth's bosom
Still suffer, still bear!

He has left us behind him
To languish and pine:
Ah, Master, we sorrow
For the joy that is thine.

"How different is this from the language of the Gospel: They worshiped him; and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God" (W. Lock).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

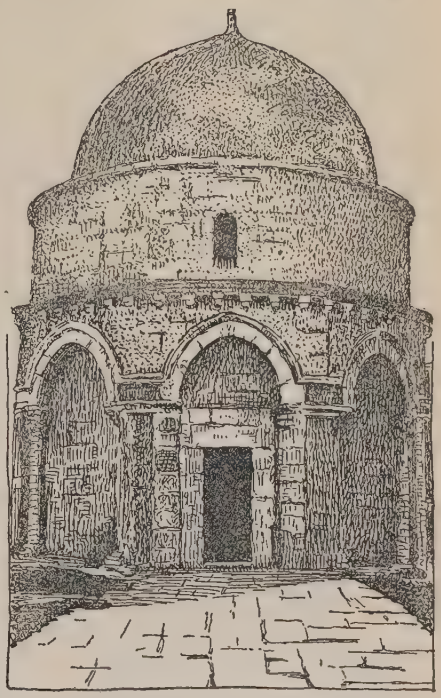
And he vanished out of their sight, verse 31. Dr. Latham sees in this statement a special proof of the historicity of the incident, for an Oriental, both as guest and as host, is bound by the strictest laws in all that relates to hospitality, and that a guest should suddenly leave a house in which he is being entertained—and that, too, in the midst of a meal—without saying farewell to his host, would be such an absolute outrage, he says, that no mere story-teller could have ventured to have introduced such an incident into anything he wrote.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

After his resurrection Christ did not manifest himself to everybody; he did not appear to his enemies nor to the indifferent; he appeared only to his friends—to Mary and then to the other women, to Peter, to two disciples on their way to Emmaus, to ten apostles and subsequently to eleven, to seven men approaching the seashore, to the whole number of apostles, and afterwards to

five hundred brethren at once, then to James, and finally to the little group gathered round him on the Mount of Olives. The stories of his appearances are fragmentary, and we do not know the consecutive order of all the events. His visits were occasional, sudden and mysterious. They served their purpose of accustoming the disciples to think of him as a Spiritual Presence, "removed from them and yet not unmindful of them, a Living Friend whose mode of working was changed, but whose heart was the same."

The Chapel of the Ascension marks the traditional spot of Christ's final parting from his followers. It is on the ridge of the Mount of Olives in the vicinity of Bethany. It is octagonal in form and was built by the Crusaders. The eight arcades were originally open, but the Mohammedans walled up seven sides and built a new cupola without any opening in the center. At the entrance of the court is a minaret which also dates back to the Crusaders; from its top one can look upon the city of Jerusalem and on even to the Dead Sea and the Jordan.



The Chapel of the Ascension

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Note that Jesus did not begin his interpretation of the Scriptures as soon as he overtook the two men on their way. They were engrossed in their own sorrowful thoughts, and they would not have welcomed the teaching of one whom they took to be a stranger. Though he well knew the cause of their sadness, he skilfully led them to tell him about it. After they had told him what had happened, and had given expression to their hopes and their fears, then they were ready for Jesus' consolation and revelation.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE MEANING OF THE RESURRECTION

Beginning the Lesson. They had trusted that it was he who should redeem Israel. For one brief day the New Kingdom had appeared to be at hand. The multitude who had come up to the feast had strewn garments and palm branches in his way; in wild joy they had hailed him "King of Israel"; in the temple the very children had welcomed him with their Hosannas! Now in their desolation this all seemed strange and unreal, like the memory of something that had happened long ago. He in whom they trusted was dead, and Israel was still in bonds to "a people of strange language."

What now was left them but to return to their homes and take up their old daily toil, if fortunately they escaped the rage of the Pharisees? They were broken in spirit, derelict in hope, their hearts darkened by the tragedy of Golgotha. Him they could never forget—so compassionate, so lovable, so gracious, so kingly, so gifted with divine power; but never again could they look for the restoration of Israel. This was the end of it all.

Suddenly there broke upon their despair the unearthly fear, the unearthly vision, the inconceivable joy of the Resurrection. In the throbbing of their

hearts they could not believe for gladness that they looked upon him who had been alive and was dead and is living for evermore. Yet they should have known; he had foretold them, but they had never understood his words.

For the space of forty days he appeared to them, conversed with them, often. They lived in the momentary expectation of seeing him. At any instant he might be with them—in the city, among the hills, by the lake-side. He appeared to them singly; he was seen by numbers at once. They had many "infallible proofs" that he was the Word of Life whom they had heard, whom they had seen with their eyes, and touched with their hands.

The light of that Divine Presence transfigured for them the whole aspect and purpose of existence. No dream of an earthly realm, but now at last the true "Kingdom of God" opened upon them with the splendor of the heavens. And when the Holy Spirit descended, "teaching them all things, and bringing all things to their remembrance" which Jesus had said to them, they stood forth new men, scarcely to be recognized as the eager but unsteadfast Peter, the doubting Thomas, the unbelieving brother of the Lord portrayed in the Gospels.

Possessed by the joy of his living presence and the certainty of life everlasting, it was Christ they preached, Christ risen, Christ alive, Christ undying, Christ in companionship with them—unseen indeed, but never beyond the possibility of vision—"unto the end of the world."

When the early teachers had passed away, it was the power of that revelation which carried the martyrs rejoicing to the rack, to the stake, to the wild beasts. It inspired the steadfast faith, the peace of heart, the natural sorrow sweetened by the knowledge that to be with Christ is far better, which mark the epitaphs in the Catacombs. It illumined their walls with emblems of joy and pictures of unchanging youth. The very cross itself was divested of all memories of torture and shame and death, and made radiant with the symbolism of kingship and triumph.

"I am with you always, even unto the end." That has been the heritage of the world for nineteen centuries. It is still the world's heritage, and it is ours to make known to all men, and to bear ever in remembrance among ourselves. —From an Editorial in The Bible in The World.

The Evidence of the Resurrection. Most impressive and significant is the fact that every book of the New Testament is dated "after Easter." That is to say, it all comes to us from authors who live and move and have their being in the radiant sunlight of Christ's resurrection. They have recorded whatever we know about "the historic Jesus," but they write as men who are already in fellowship with the risen Christ. To quote a modern writer, "Faith in the resurrection was not only prevalent, but immensely powerful before any of our New Testament books were written. Not one of them would have been written but for that faith. It is not this or that in the New Testament—it is not the story of the empty tomb, or of the appearing of Jesus in Jerusalem or in Galilee—which is the primary evidence of the resurrection; it is the New Testament itself. The life that throbs in it from beginning to end, the life that always fills us again with wonder as it beats upon us from its pages, is the life which the risen Savior has quickened in Christian souls.—The Bible in the World.

How to Have Faith in the Truth of the Resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus does not admit of absolute demonstration. Undoubtedly the testimony in favor of the event is strong. It was evidently unquestioned by a great number of intelligent people living at the time of its reputed occurrence. So much force as all such evidence has is to be estimated at its logical value. So Columbus estimated at its logical value all the indications that were afforded him of the existence of another continent. To most people of that generation those evidences appeared insufficient to warrant fitting out vessels of exploration, and it was long before funds requisite for the purpose could be secured. And the magnificent result and discovery was due to the fact that in Columbus' mind there was room for America. He could see beyond the point where he could see distinctly. His thoughts could comprehend both the known and the surmised.

Thomas would not believe in the risen Christ because risen Christs were not a part of the universe as he had plotted it. The other disciples did believe in a risen Christ because they were large enough to be able to think farther

than they could think clearly, and because they were able to push the chariot of their convictions over a road that had not been logically paved. And undoubtedly when Thomas did finally accept Christ it was not because he had reasoned him out by pressing his hands into the print of the nails, but because of having had dimly wrought in him a capacity for larger persuasions than his mental and moral contractedness had been hitherto able to accommodate.

And that is still the way in which we have to acquire the art of great believing, the art of immense assurance of faith and the triumphant joy that is bound to go along with it. A world that is only large enough to contain our petty employments, or to contain our small pleasures, is not a world big enough to have room in it for a human Son of God or for his immortal escape from the tomb. We need to rise to higher levels of thought; to have created for ourselves a world too large to be filled with the small and passing interests and commonplace incidents of life; till our mental reluctance and moral antagonism are dissolved in the warm light of the larger prospect, and in the cordiality of complete conviction we are able to echo the words of the persuaded Thomas, "My Lord and my God."—Condensed from a sermon on Constructive Faith, by Charles H. Parkhurst.

Whose Faith Follow. Midway of her college course a change came to Amy Bradford. She studied philosophy, and grappled great questions—volition and cognition, the reality of existence, the value of sense perception, the probable cause and reason for all things—until her head swam and her faith was as a little tiny cork, tossed on the great sea of doubt.

On the Easter Sunday of her junior year she was unhappy enough. Why should any one celebrate Easter? Was the beautiful story true? Could such a thing be? Was there, after all, any real foundation for faith?

She locked herself into her room, determined to think it out. She turned the pages of her Bible to find the story of the resurrection; but instead she found the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the marked words, "Whose faith follow."

Whose faith should she follow? Surely, it was the faith of the best people whom she had ever known; the faith that made them sweet and brave and strong; the faith that made them a help and a comfort to others; the faith of her own father and mother, of the heroes who through the long generations had removed mountains and quelched the violence of fire, and out of weakness had brought strength.

"O Lord," she prayed, "I seem to have not much faith of my own; help me to follow that which made the others good."

The prayer had an answer. She was to think out her own problems and fight her own battles, yet she was not to ignore the faith of those who had trodden the way before her, and had found the promise of that faith in righteousness and peace.

When she rose from her knees and looked out upon the bright earth, radiant in its resurrection dress, a new peace entered her heart. Already that had begun which was to continue in the years that followed; namely, the rebuilding of her own faith as she followed that of her best and most honored friends. The church-bells began to ring, and she went forth with the others to share the beauty and joy of the day. She herself had found new life, and her heart echoed the pealing anthems, "He is risen!"—The Youth's Companion.

The Lesson of Ascension Day. Look up! is the Ascension call to these downcast eyes and thoughts. Lift up your hearts with theirs who saw their beloved Master leaving them to face a hostile world. Thenceforth their thought of him in the glory of his heavenly life glorified every place of his earthly companionship with the presence of the promised Comforter.

Like men who intellectually believe the heliocentric astronomy of Copernicus, but practically retain the geocentric ideas of Ptolemy, are many believers in the resurrection of Christ, to whom it has practically become "a dead fact stranded on the shore of the oblivious years." How can it regain for them the uplifting power it gave its eye-witnesses? Not otherwise than as they live themselves into it anew, endeavoring, like Paul, to "know the power of his resurrection" to raise the believer's thoughts from the earthly to the heavenly life.

Bereavement itself naturally prompts to this, even while we pay nature's debt of tears. This is no small part of the divine intent. It works through the unbroken human sympathies that unite the earthly and the heavenly friend. One of the stanzas of In Memoriam describes its effect upon the circle round the Christmas hearth that sang with dim eyes as they remembered "a merry song we sang with him last year."

"Our voices took a higher range;
Once more we sang: 'They do not die,
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
Nor change to us, although they change,
Rapt from the fickle and the frail,
With gathered power, yet the same.' "

How is this higher range of thought to become habitual? The preparatory forty days from Easter to the Ascension that were necessary for the bereaved disciples have their modern analogy in the case of the sorrow-stricken. Our thought of friends gone into far foreign lands goes with them. We share their new feelings, their new interests, though we know not what they do from day to day. We rejoice with their rejoicing in release from grinding toil and fretting cares, and they with ours in the home that they have left. So should thought follow the beloved who have gone beyond the mortal boundary. A common interest in the Kingdom of God unites us still. They and we together look up to the Father of all. Thus must disconsolate hearts school themselves to learn the lesson of the promised Comforter, the lesson of Ascension Day, the transference of bereaved affection from the past to the present and the future, from mortal to immortal joy.—The Outlook.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. Glory through suffering.

2. "The Christian life is the best evidence of the living Christ."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What did the Council at Jerusalem deem necessary for the Gentile churches to observe regarding things that had been sacrificed to idols and were "unclean"? 2. Is the conscience always right in its decisions? 3. How must it be educated? 4. Why is it wrong ever to act contrary to the dictates of conscience? 5. What kind of conscience did Paul say he exercised himself to attain? 6. If there are stumbling blocks in the way of intemperate people of your town, what is your duty in the matter? 7. Who said that no man liveth unto himself? 8. Explain verse 16.9. Explain verse 22.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

OUR LIVING LORD

Beginning the Lesson. In the region near the North Cape, at the close of the long winter night, the people assemble to catch the first gleam of the returning sun. As soon as it is seen, from one group to another over the country is heard the joyous exclamation, "Behold the sun! Behold the sun!"

When Jesus was crucified on Calvary and when his body rested in the tomb, then was there a long night of darkness and gloom for his followers. How could there ever again be for them gladness and rejoicing? But the events recorded in our text today brought to them "the Sun of Righteousness" and they gave voice to joyous praise. What made the great change?

The Fisherman's Faith. The editor of one of our leading religious journals was walking along some cliffs near the sea one Easter morning. In his walk he encountered an old fisherman, and during their conversation together the editor was struck by the simple faith of the old fisherman in his Risen Savior. "How do you know that Christ is risen?" he asked. "Sir," came the reply, "do you see those cottages near the cliffs? Well, sir, sometimes when I'm far away out at sea I know that the sun is risen by the light that is reflected from yon cottage windows. How do I know that Christ is risen? Why, sir, do I not see his light reflected from the faces of some of my fellows every day, and do I not feel the light of his glory in my own life? As soon tell me that the

sun is not risen when I see his reflected glory, as tell me that my Lord is not risen."—Unknown.

Abide with me. They reached Emmaus as the shadows of the late afternoon were lengthening, and as the sun was far down toward the western hills. They reached the door of the house where they were going to stay. The two men stopped; but the stranger, saying only, I suppose, a pleasant "Good-night," walked right on. Then they realized how much he had helped them, and they could not stand the thought of his going on and leaving them. The sunlight seemed to fade, the shadows to deepen, the chill of the evening damp to smite upon them, the old sadness and discouragement to settle on them, as he turned to walk away. "Abide with us!" they cried. "Stay with us, we are so lonely as the evening comes on, you have helped us; stay with us, talk to us, still help us to be brave." He stopped. He turned. He went into the house with them. As the sun went down a strange light seemed shining in his face. They wondered, yet could not understand. Supper was ready and they sat down. He went to the head of the table as though they were his guests, rather than he theirs. They wondered, yet could not understand. He took some bread, closed his eyes, and asked a blessing. As he prayed light shone in his face. They opened their eyes, looked again, and knew him,—Jesus risen from the dead! Oh! story of stories, to be told again, on the very eventide of Easter Day!

What would it mean if one of you were really to begin to say to the Risen Lord Jesus, "Abide with me"? What would it mean if towards evening of this very day, and towards evening of every Lord's day to come, you were to ask this dear Friend, who once was dead, dying for you; who now liveth, living for you; who ever liveth to intercede for you,—what would it mean if you were henceforth to seek earnestly for his abiding in your life?—Condensed from The Silver Cup, by Charles Cuthbert Hall.

Our Eyes Are Holden. Christ still draws near to men in various disguises. He clothes himself in human-like form and speaks to us by the lips of some messenger, who meets us by the way, and who is as truly an angel as though he came clad in glory from the skies. You know what I mean. Christ reveals himself to us in many ways, so simple, so commonplace, that we do not always realize that he has been with us, though we may have felt our hearts glow under the kindling, quickening words that fell upon our ear.

Dr. A. J. Gordon had a dream one Saturday night which profoundly influenced all his after ministry. In his dream he was in his pulpit, when a stranger entered and passed slowly up the aisle. A gentleman offered him a seat in his pew, which was quietly accepted. At the close of the service, Dr. Gordon asked the gentleman, in whose pew the stranger had sat, who the visitor was. "Why, don't you know?" was the reply, "that was Jesus of Nazareth; doubtless he will come again." "An indescribable rush of emotion came over me," writes Dr. Gordon. "To think that Jesus was present! What did he think of the service? Had I preached as I would like him to hear? A lifetime, almost an eternity of interest, was crowded into a single moment." That vision of the personal presence of Christ transformed Dr. Gordon's life, ministry, and church. May our impressions of the Lord's nearness be as vivid and as potent!—George Hanson, in The Resurrection and the Life.

Sentence Sermons.

I need thy presence every passing hour;
What but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me!—Henry F. Lyte.

We are not orphans; we do not look back to a Christ who is dead, nor forward to a Christ who is to appear; we live with a present Christ.—Lyman Abbott.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who wrote the Epistle to the Romans? 2. How did Peter learn that all meats are "clean"? 3. Explain verse 14. 4. What did Jesus say about the sin of one who causes others to stumble? (Mt. 18.6.) 5. What are some of your rights which you ought not to use? 6. What are some of the reasons for our Prohibition Law?

LESSON XII—JUNE 21

THE SIN OF CAUSING OTHERS TO STUMBLE (Temperance Lesson)

GOLDEN TEXT: It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth. Romans 14.21.

LESSON Romans 14.13-23 Devotional Reading 1 John 4.7-13

Romans 14.13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling. 14 I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself: save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. 15 For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died. 16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of: 17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 For he that herein serveth Christ is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men. 19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another. 20 Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God. All things indeed are clean; howbeit it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. 21 It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor "to do anything" whereby thy brother stumbleth. 22. The faith which thou hast, have thou to thyself before God. Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth. 23 But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because "he eateth" not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENT

I. One's Responsibility for his Brother, verse 13. See the Historical Background. But thou, why dost thou judge thy brother? questions Paul in the preceding verses (10-12), or thou again, Why dost thou set at nought thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God. So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God. Therefore, [in view of God's judgment], Paul continues, let us not judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather [notice the play upon words here] that no man put a stumbling block in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling. Instead of thinking about your brother's conduct and condemning it (verse 10), think about your own conduct, and see that it does not cause another to sin. See 1 Cor. 8.8-13. "Stumbling block" and "an occasion of falling" are seemingly synonymous, though the first is taken to mean a hindrance and the second something that actually throws a brother down in his life's course. See Rom. 9.33; Lev. 19.14.

> "This is a very solemn warning. My liberty may trip some one into bondage. If life were an affair of one, my liberty might be wholesome, but it is an affair of many, and my liberty may be destructive to my fellows. I am not only responsible for my life, but for its influence. When a thing has been lived there is still the example to deal with. If orange-peel be thrown upon the pavement that is not the end of the feast. The man who slips over the peel is a factor in the incident, and my responsibility covers him" (J. H. Jowett).

II. Another's Scruples Must Be Respected, verses 14-16. I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself, in its own nature. As a "Pharisee of the Pharisees" Paul has strictly kept the Levitical law which forbade the eating of certain animals (Lev. 11); his knowledge that nothing is unclean of itself had come to him through his fellowship with the Lord Jesus. The Greek word "koinon," unclean, means literally "common"—such food was common to the world, but forbidden to the pious Jew. Recall Peter's vision on the housetop. Nothing is unclean save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

> "Mistaken conscience calls for correction by better light, but never by violation. To follow conscience is, by itself, no security that we are doing what is in itself right, but to violate conscience, which is our actual view of right and wrong, is always wrong" (Moule, quoted by Dummelow).

You must respect another's scruple, even if it seems to you a foolish one, for

"That no Man put a Stumbling-block in his Brother's Way or an Occasion of Falling"

Rom. 14.13

"For the Kingdom of God is not Eating and Drinking but Righteousness and Peace and Joy in the Holy Spirit"

Rom. 14.17

TEMPERANCE (BURNE-JONES)

(Pouring water upon the flames and trampling upon them with unharmed feet)

if because of meat thy brother is grieved, his conscience is hurt, then thou walkest no longer in love. Love is the test of conduct. In the Church of Rome there were those who had formerly worshiped idols, the old association of ideas still clung to them, and if they partook of meat that had been offered to idols before being sold, their conscience troubled them, fearing that in so doing they were resuming their old practices of idol worship. They were ignorant, unenlightened, narrow, but their conscience must be respected. If they saw the Jewish Christians partaking of such food they would be led to do the same, and disobey their conscience.

Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died. For the sake of a little self-indulgence in eating you may be in danger of destroying one for whom Christ suffered and died. "Do not think more of your food than Christ thought of his life" (Bengel).

> "I may feel at perfect liberty to drink wine. Had I only myself to consider, and knowing that my temptation does not lie that way, I might use wine regularly or as often as I felt disposed to enjoy a needed stimulant. I may feel quite convinced in my own mind that morally I am not one whit the worse for doing so. But I cannot determine whether I am to indulge myself or not without considering the effect my conduct will have on others. There may be among my friends some who know that their temptation does lie that way, and whose conscience bids them altogether refrain. If by my example such persons are encouraged to silence the voice of their own conscience, then I incur the incalculable guilt of helping to destroy a brother for whom Christ died" (Marcus Dods).

Let not your good be evil spoken of. If you exercise your good, your Christian liberty, your right to eat anything, then others will speak evil of your liberty. It is too great a price to pay for a matter of so little importance.

> "There are two freedoms, the false where a man is free to do as he likes, and the true where he is free to do as he ought" (Kingsley).

III. The Important and the Unimportant, verses 17-19. For the Kingdom of God, the reign of Christ over men, is not eating and drinking; the important matters are righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit—through his indwelling.

> "Religion is love and joy and peace in the Holy Ghost; the cheerfulest thing in the world; it is inconsistent with moroseness, sourness, and with what is not according to the gentleness of Christ Jesus" (John Wesley).

He who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and man. So then let us pursue things that make for peace, and things whereby we may improve one another, that is, let us consider what effect upon others our conduct will have.

IV. Abstinence for the Sake of Others, verses 20-23. Overthrow, pull down, is the opposite of edify, build up. Possibly some of the "strong" Christians were on the point of disrupting the Church of Rome over the unimportant question of "meat," and Paul counsels them not to overthrow for meat's sake the work of God, "the Christian brother, whose Christian personality is God's work." Paul now repeats the thought of verse 14 in saying, All things indeed are clean; howbeit it is evil for that man who eateth with offence to his own conscience. It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth. Compare the Golden Rule and the two Great Commandments.

The faith which thou hast,—the enlightened faith, which permits thee to see that all things are clean—have thou to thyself before God—do not proclaim it so as to offend others. Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth. But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith, whatsoever is not done because one believes it to be right, is sin.

> When your conscience tells you that any course of conduct is not wrong in itself, that is not the end of the matter. Your conscience has further questions to settle. What will be the influence upon others if you follow

that course? You are your neighbor's keeper whether you will or not. Can your neighbor do without violating his conscience what you can do without violating yours? Can he do with safety to himself what you can do with safety to yourself?

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

If because of meat thy brother is grieved, verse 15. Every meal was in a manner dedicated to the household gods by laying some portion of it on the family altar. Where one member of a heathen family had become converted, he would at once be confronted with the question, rising in his own conscience, whether by partaking of such food he might not be countenancing idolatry. On the occasion of a birthday, or a marriage or a safe return from sea, or any circumstance that seemed to call for celebration, it was customary to sacrifice in some public temple. And after the legs and the entrails of the victim had been burnt on the altar, the worshiper received the remainder and invited his friends and guests to partake of it, either in the temple itself, or in the surrounding grove, or at his own home. Much of the meat offered in worship found its way into the common market, so that at any meal the Christian ran the risk of eating things sacrificed to idols.—Marcus Dods.

Let not then your good be evil spoken of, verse 16. We can imagine the bustle in the "macellun," the bazaar of the butchers, where the different kinds of meat cause anxious Christians terrible scruples of conscience; afterwards again, when the meat, which perhaps came from offering to idols, is served as a roast in the home of a pagan it might cause embarrassment to a Christian who may happen to be bidden to the feast. We see the "strong" Christian showing off his enlightenment and actually sharing the banquet in the pagan temple—a stumbling block to the "weak" brother, who watches him with venomous look, and who, though "weak in faith," is strong in "judging" and "speaking evil."—Adolf Deissmann.

Dictating a Letter at Corinth

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

When Paul was at Corinth and about to return to Jerusalem with the alms contributed by the Greek churches, he said that "After I have been there I must also see Rome." It was this contemplated visit which led him to write to the Christians in Rome to prepare them, and also to counsel them in matters wherein he knew they needed guidance.

One of these matters concerned the eating of meat. Jesus had abolished the old distinction between lawful and unlawful meat: in Mark we read, "Perceive ye not, that whatsoever from without goeth into the man, it cannot defile him? This he said, making all meats clean." Peter had been told in a vision, "What God hath cleansed, make not thou common." The Council at Jerusalem had declared in their letter to the Christians at Corinth that they should abstain from

things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from (things) strangled.

When the question arose at Corinth as to whether the Gentile Christians could partake with their heathen friends of meat which had been offered to idols, Paul disregarded the decree of the Council at Jerusalem, to which he at that time evidently agreed. He had advanced in knowledge since then. He decided that to do this was not wrong in itself, for all meat was God's gift, but that the Christians should abstain from eating it for the sake of those whose consciences held it to be wrong. These latter Paul called "the weak in the faith," but their scrupulous convictions were to be carefully tolerated by the "strong" brethren. A somewhat similar question arose, it seems, at Rome. Paul did not approve of the scruples of those who objected to the eating of meat, but he counseled those who believed as he did to forego their own right to eat rather than to lead their "weaker" brothers to violate their consciences by eating of meat also. To eat meat was not a sin, but to go against one's conscience (though wrong) was a sin. This is the theme—Abstinence for the sake of others—which is ours for our Temperance Sunday.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Have you Paul's boundless sympathy for the weak? Have you a pupil who is satisfied that he knows what God requires of man, and regards intolerantly all who differ from him? Can you regard him charitably and help him grow into the attitude of Paul? Can you make allowances for another's narrowness or uncharitableness, deal patiently and tactfully with his unreasonableness or stupidity or weakness?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC A STUMBLING BLOCK

Beginning the Lesson. What is one's conscience? "Conscience" is literally "con" and "scio," to know with; it is the best counselor one has. Is one's conscience always right? What is one's duty in regard to having it right? If a man's conscience tells him that a right thing is wrong, what is his duty to do—obey or disobey his conscience? Is it always wrong to transgress conscience? "Conscience means a man's best actual sight of the law of right and wrong. It may be a dim and distorted sight, but it is his best at the moment. He cannot violate it without sin, nor can you bid him do so without yourself sinning."

Said an Indian in Northwestern Canada: "Conscience is a little three-cornered piece of tin inside my heart which turns round and round and hurts; but if I do not listen to it, by-and-by the corners wear off, and then it will not hurt any more." What does that apt figure teach? The province of the conscience is to hurt. Not only does it declare what is right and what is wrong for one to do, but it urges one to choose the right, and it hurts when one has chosen wrong. But if it is unheeded, it loses its power to hurt, and hence its power to control one's actions. He who disobeys his conscience and does what he believes to be wrong, however mistaken his conscience may be, dulls and weakens the power of that inner monitor.

There was a question of conscience in the church of Rome about which the members were divided: what was it? How did Paul settle the question in his letter to them? What other principles of conduct does our excerpt from his letter teach?

The Higher Court. Young people in their enthusiasm sometimes make the mistake of trying to weigh all actions in the scale of right and wrong, as if this were the highest standard of judgment. "Show me," they say, "that a thing is right and I will stand by it though the heavens fall; or show me that it is wrong, and I am ready to renounce it without hesitation."

But it does not need much experience in life to convince one that there are a multitude of actions not so easily labeled as belonging to the right hand or the left, and the perplexity grows when one sees excellent people, whose honesty cannot be questioned, arriving at so widely different conclusions.

It is not the great questions that perplex the young Christian, but the many small and seemingly unimportant decisions that he is constantly called upon to make unless he is satisfied simply to drift with the tide, and do what others do; and just here is where the wisdom of the higher court comes in. It is not

a new tribunal. Paul went to it for counsel, and endorsed its authority. He found in his own experience that it might not always be wise to do things that in themselves were not wrong, and he gave two standards by which he judged them.

"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not." Here are two of the many fine, expressive words whose root meaning we have almost lost out of sight since the time of King James' translation. "Expedire" was literally "to free the feet" —and the things that were expedient were those which hastened the running, which urged forward, which removed impediments.

It is not necessary for me to prove to myself or others that a thing is in itself evil, and therefore wrong; I need only consider whether it will help me in pressing toward the mark, or whether on the whole it is likely to hinder my running by damaging my equipment—my power of body and brain, my physical and mental vigor, my clearness of perception of right and wrong, my influence with others. Will it be a wise investment or a waste of my time and my money? If it is called recreation, does it re-create or does it exhaust by unhealthy excitement?

The other figure through which Paul defines the judgment of the higher court is also one that he loves, the figure of a building. "All things are lawful for me, but all things edify not." Here is the old word with the old meaning, from the same root as "edifice," "edificare," to build up, and especially referring to the building of a temple. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Ye are God's building"; "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?" and so, after putting aside the lawful things that are not expedient, do not free the feet for the race, he turns to the figure of the building, and rejects lawful things that do not edify.

A great many words have been wasted in trying to make universal law. Why not let that go for the present, and see how many of our individual perplexities can be settled by this court whose authority Paul recognized?—Condensed from an Article in The Christian Endeavor World, by Emily H. Miller.

True Liberty always Involves Restraint. It is easy enough to argue for those Roman Christians who believed with Paul that there is nothing wrong in itself in eating meat that had been offered to idols. "My conscience is clear," such a one might say, "I know I am doing nothing wrong. If another man thinks it unlawful to eat such meat let him abstain. Why should my rights be interfered with? It is my own personal affair whether I eat or don't eat." Have you not heard similar arguments in regard to the right of drinking intoxicating liquor? What does Paul say? He does not deny their "rights," but he would have them enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God who are free to do what is right, others considered, in contrast with that liberty where he is free to do what is right himself alone considered. True liberty always involves restraint.

An Interference with Personal Liberty. In the famous debate between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas on the question of slavery, Douglas said: "Lincoln says that he looks forward to a time when slavery shall be abolished everywhere. I look forward to a time when each State shall be allowed to do as it pleases. If it chooses to keep slavery forever, it is not my business, but its own; if it chooses to abolish slavery, it is its own business, not mine. I care more for the great principle of self-government, the right of the people to rule, than I do for all the negroes in Christendom."

How do the arguments of some people who are opposed to our prohibition law resemble this argument of Stephen A. Douglas?

The following observations in regard to the law against theft come from The Commercial Bulletin of Boston. They are, of course, a take-off of the arguments used against our prohibition law:—

When a law interferes in any way with your pleasure, get the law repealed or disobey the law.

This plan represents a new school of philosophy, and what a delightful scheme for conduct of life it presents, for a man to seek always his own pleasure, without giving a thought to the welfare of his neighbors!

I want something that my neighbor owns. Because I want it, is that not sufficient reason for taking it? I may be strong enough to take what I want

by force, or I may take it secretly, but the bother of the matter is that there is a law that says that taking the property of another is stealing, and a man who steals may be punished if he is caught.

Of course it is wrong to have laws against stealing. The mere fact that we have laws under which the thief may be punished is a direct incentive to stealing. All men are entitled to personal liberty, and an outrageous law that provides punishment for thieves interferes with the liberty of a man to take what he wants. If we regard stealing as morally wrong, there is no virtue in being honest while laws against robbery exist. It is manifest that the way to make all men honest, and at the same time restore that personal liberty that is so dear to those who write letters to the daily papers, is to abolish all laws that provide punishment for stealing. An enormous sum is spent in trying to prevent stealing, but without success, as stealing continues in spite of the law. If laws against stealing were repealed, of course all this money could be saved.

Young people always resent interference with their personal liberty, and because of laws that punish those detected in stealing, young men and women are tempted to steal in order to cheat the law. If laws against stealing were repealed, it is evident that there would be no temptation to steal, and everybody would be satisfied with petty thievery that would be beneficial to all.

The greatest injury is done to morality and personal liberty by those fanatics who insist on absolute prohibition of all stealing.

The Liquor Traffic a Stumbling Block. Nobody seems to consider seriously the possibility of the outright repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. The aim all along the battle line is so to define intoxicating liquors as to leave a leeway for a professedly limited indulgence in alcoholic liquors by those who have never claimed to believe in total abstinence. The advocates of modification of the law insist that they are firmly opposed to drunkenness, and that they would in every way block the return of the saloon; but that they feel that the present law puts hardship upon multitudes of law-abiding citizens who, if left to themselves, would drink a little, but never much.

It is interesting to listen to men who say that they do not expect anybody to drink much if the law is changed. If the liquor business ever comes back, with the slogan that all who desire are to drink a little, and nobody is to drink very much, it will come back with a business aim the like of which has perhaps never been met with in money-making circles. For the object of any business is to expand. If a man has nothing but cheese to sell his cry is for everybody to eat a little more cheese. Sound business policy, just from the point of business, would be to exhort the moderate drinkers to see if they could not increase their capacity just a little. It is always interesting also to hear men interested in the liquor traffic say that they abhor drunkenness. Probably they have always abhorred drunkenness. A drunkard is a good customer for the liquor traffic, but a poor advertiser. The ideal for a liquor business would be the development of the capacity of hosts of customers to the point where they could consume increasing amounts of liquor without getting drunk. As for the saloon, let us remember that the saloon as an institution was never directly voted out of the nation. The saloon as an institution is a by-product of, and an accompaniment of, the liquor business. If the liquor traffic is to come back, its coming back without the saloon would make an uproar at once. The situation would be somewhat as if we should pass a law allowing men to drink soda water, but insisting that they could not drink it at a drug store.

If we are to achieve anything by way of appeal perhaps it is best to talk to the moderate drinker himself. We can concede every argument such drinkers advance and yet make out a convincing case for total abstinence. The demand for abstinence comes out of the complexities and intricacies of modern social existence.

When society attains to power like ours we have to prohibit outright some things which we might have allowed within limits in less complex periods. The result is that we all agree to forego some courses which might not be dangerous in a simpler stage of social organization, but which are dangerous with men packed together in such congestion as at the present time. A man in a crowded city today could not talk about his right to dig a well for himself on his own premises without meeting vigorous challenge. He might

insist that he intended to use the water only for his own drinking, but if he applied for a permit for such a well before any board of health he might find a rather strict prohibition confronting him. He might argue till he was black in the face about the chances on the side of safety against contamination, and his argument might have considerable force, but that would not likely get for him permission to dig the well.

The truth is that in its search for safety society has to resort to expedients which seem extreme. Scientific safety always consists in "overdoing the thing." Suppose we watch a great surgeon about to perform an operation. The precautions which he takes today against infection are vastly more elaborate and complicated than those of a quarter century ago. He wears rubber gloves and he puts a mask over his face. Just a little more than twenty-five years ago doctors would have said this was a needless going to extremes. Possibly a surgeon might work on for considerable stretches of time neglecting these particular precautions without doing any harm, but his procedure would be condemned as unscientific and even as slovenly. So also in the wider social matters. As a deliberate policy we adopt plans which in this or that instance seem extreme and needless, but the policies are on the safe side, and so we adopt them. I have seen a good many arguments against total abstinence, but I have yet to see one which seeks to prove that total abstinence is not on the side of safety so far as society's relation to the liquor traffic is concerned.—Condensed from an Article in The Church School Journal, by Francis J. McConnell.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. Is John Stuart Mill right in saying, "My liberty ends when it begins to involve the possibility of ruin to my neighbor"?

2. Public questions that involve the limiting of liberty.

3. French social workers believe that the use of strong spirits diminishes among the working class in the ratio that the material welfare of the individual increases. Is this true in our country?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

ABSTAINING FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS

Beginning the Lesson. Among the laws recorded in Deuteronomy there is one which aims to prevent loss of life from falling from the roof of a house. It reads: "When thou buildest a new house, there thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thy house, if any man fall from thence." The owner who failed to obey this law was held responsible for the death of one who fell from his roof. The owner might be strong and steady and in no danger of falling himself, but that did not free him from the duty of making his roof secure for a weaker man. This lesson Paul is teaching the Romans in the words of our text: however strong they may be, however safe at any height, they must build battlements for the sake of their weaker brethren.

Abstaining from Coffee for the Sake of Others. The Nez Perces have great reverence for the church. This was well impressed upon some of our presbyters at one of our Fourth of July camp meetings near the church at Lapwai in 1895. We, with four white ministers and several friends, had taken our dinner, intending to eat under the trees near the church. We had spread it out on some boards on the ground, when a heavy rain began to fall. We were not long in deciding to go into the church. Two or three of the white ministers picked up the board on which our feast was spread. This procession was headed by one of the ladies carrying the steaming coffee pot followed by the remainder of the company laden with baskets, etc. They proceeded to carry the decision into effect. Two old Indian women sat under a tree near the door and when I came up a few steps behind the others one of them exclaimed, "Miss Kate, why do you allow those whites to desecrate the house of God by going in there to eat?" When I told the brethren how they felt, they meekly laid down the board, as if seeking protection from the rain only. It was a hungry party that stood there for an hour, waiting for the rain to cease, but not one mouthful did we dare to touch, for there sat the

old women, eyeing every move, nor did they leave until we and our provisions were well upon the outside.—Kate C. McBeth, in The Nez Perces Indians since Lewis and Clark.

Ma's Conscience. In a story by Alice Louise Lee, a woman whom all her friends called "Ma" had induced a friend to invest her money in a company that failed. Long years afterwards, when by the hardest toil she had saved enough money, she announced her intention of giving it all to this friend. A young man tried to reason with her, to coerce her conscience. "But don't you see, Ma, that your sense of obligation is far-fetched?" he asked. "There's no law that could for a moment hold you responsible."

"You needn't talk law to me," responded Ma. "That Chatham Trust Company went by law—some bankrupt law or other—and so left the folks in Maplewood pretty badly off. Anyway you can fix it, I owe Delia Smith that money, and after seein' her all bent over and trembly and hard-workin', you can't get that idea out of my head."

Here Ma smiled tremulously and raised a corner of her apron to her eyes. "Don't you see," she added, gently, "I couldn't take a mite of comfort if I didn't do what I see is the right thing? I'd rather feel easy and clear inside than have all the money I ever saw. I couldn't enjoy it a bit if I had to think all the time it really belonged to some one else."

For the Sake of Others. Do you say, "I am not obliged to sign away my liberty of drinking in order to keep on the safe side"? True, you are not obliged. But here is a river which we have to cross. It is broad and deep and rapid; whoever falls into it is certain to be drowned. Here is a narrow footbridge—a single timber extending across. He who is lithe of limb and steady of brain and nerve may skip over it in safety. Yonder is a broad, strong bridge. All may cross it in perfect safety—the aged and feeble, the young and the tottering weak ones—there is no danger there. Now, you say, "Let them go yonder who cannot walk this timber." But we know that if we cross that timber, though we may go safely, many others who will attempt to follow us will surely perish, and we feel better to go by the bridge. —William Arnot.

Who Is To Drink It? This is the report of an actual dialogue which took place between two American citizens the other day—one of them a business man, and the other a clergyman, to whom the business man spoke frankly, as one does to a good friend:

"Well," said the layman, with an air of finality, "Prohibition is a failure, and we must get used to the idea of making America 'wet' once again."

"But who is to drink the liquor?" queried his friend. "Will you?"

"Why, no," he replied. "You know that I am a teetotaller."

"Will your son drink it?"

"No, that shall not be!"

"Would you want it to come back for the sake of your clerks?"

"No, it is my practice to discharge any clerks who drink liquor."

"Do you want your customers to drink it?"

"No, I would much rather not; I am sure that those who use strong drink will not buy so much from me nor pay their bills promptly."

"Will you want the engineer on your train to use it?"

"No, I admit I don't want to ride on a drunkard's train."

"Ah, then you want this liquor for the men whom you meet driving cars on the public highway."

"No, of course not; that is a danger to everybody."

"Well, then, who is to drink this liquor in America, pray tell me?"

"I am not so sure that anybody should drink it. I guess we're much better off without it."—Reformed Church Messenger.

Sentence Sermons. Freedom means that the will should be governed by the conscience; and it means that the conscience should be governed by God.—Alexander Maclaren.

No one can clearly see his rights who is blind to his duties.

LESSON XIII—JUNE 28

REVIEW: JESUS THE WORLD SAVIOR: SUFFERING AND SOVEREIGNTY

GOLDEN TEXT: God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. John 3.16.

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

By questions recall the lesson to which each allusion refers.

Lord, grant us grace to love thee so,
That, glad of heart and glad of face,
At last we may sit high or low,
Each in his place.—Christina Rossetti.

It requires a well-kept life to do the will of God, and even a better-kept life to will to do his will.—Henry Drummond.

"One went to pray? or, rather say,
One went to boast, and the other to pray."

Let any forlorn creature happen along that looked as if it hadn't a friend in the world, and Aunt Malvina was for taking it in, putting the best robe upon it, and giving it the best bit in the cupboard.—G. L. Treple.

With canine loyalty I wagged an unoffended tail, and accepted my one-third of the crumbs that had fallen from the table of the proud.—C. E. Montague.

But they never really saw him,
They never understood him,
Their hearts were never his.
It was their lips and just their lips, sang
"Hallelujah!"—Frank Kingdon.

Again and again I have been tempted to give up the struggle, but always the figure of that strange man hanging on the cross sends me back to my task again.—George Tyrrell.

"Stone upon stone rear we churches today;
Finer and fairer than ever are they.
'How we do honor him!' proudly we say—
But Christ said, 'Go ye!' "

Each meal should be a sacramental feast,—
A Eucharist each breaking of the bread,
Wherein we meet again our Great High Priest,
And pledge new troth to our exalted Head.—John Oxenham.

Thy nature is not less divine;
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year.—Wadsworth.

He had quite a long run in the rôle of the Importunate Woman and, like her, he got there at last.—C. E. Montague.

Bethink thee of thy Lord,
Who healed again the smitten ear,
And sheathed his follower's sword.—Whittier.

QUESTIONS UPON THE QUARTER'S LESSONS

For Young People and Adults. 1. What stories in which rich men figure are told only in the Gospel of Luke? 2. For what purpose did Jesus tell the

parable of the rich man and the beggar? 3. If prosperity does not tend to make men better Christians, why is it? 4. What is prayer? 5. How did Jesus teach a lesson about making a business transaction of hospitality? 6. What is the lesson of the parable of the pounds? 7. After his meeting with Zacchæus, what did Jesus declare to be the whole purpose of his mission? 8. What is the meaning of the Lord's Supper? 9. What are evidences of the resurrection of Jesus? 10. Where in the Bible is the great chapter on immortality?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. Tell the two parables about prayer which Jesus gave, and explain the lesson of each. 2. What is the difference between praying and saying your prayers? 3. Have you a right to coast down hill into a road that is crossed continually by autos, and expect God to keep you from harm because you have asked him to do this? Explain your answer. 4. How did Jesus teach a lesson about giving others the preference? 5. Tell the parable which shows up the evil of selfishness. 6. Tell the parable about prayer which Jesus gave which shows that we are partners with Jesus. 7. What is the meaning of the Lord's Supper? 8. Describe the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. 9. Where is Bethany? The Mount of Olives? 10. What last request did Jesus make of his disciples?

A REVIEW OF IMPORTANT WORDS

Complete the following words, and tell the occasion for each:

1. For every one that exalteth himself . . . 2. For this corruptible must put . . . 3. If they hear not Moses and . . . 4. My house shall be a house . . . 5. When thou makest a feast, bid . . . 6. This is my body which . . . 7. O death, where is . . . 8. God, be thou merciful . . . 9. Behooved it not the Christ . . . 10. The half of my goods . . . 11. Suffer the little children . . . 12. Be ye steadfast, unmovable . . . 13. Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom . . . 14. Pray that ye enter not . . . 15. When he came to himself . . . 16. Was not our heart burning . . . 17. For the Son of man came to . . . 18. Flesh and blood cannot inherit . . . 19. When he was yet afar off . . . 20. The sting of death is . . . 21. Father, if thou be willing, remove . . . 22. Unto every one that hath . . .

WRITTEN WORK

For Young People and Adults.

1. Lessons from the Parables.
2. Zacchæus' Story of the Day when Jesus Found Him.
3. The Patient Master and the Slow Scholars.

For Intermediates and Seniors.

1. A Day of Strange Happenings.
2. The Story of a Tax Collector in Jericho.
3. The Story of a Selfish Rich Man who Lived in a Palace.

QUESTIONS TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

For Young People and Adults. 1. Who is the Holy Spirit? 2. What do we mean by the communion of the Holy Spirit? 3. What happened at Pentecost? 4. What made the happenings possible? 5. What made the happenings at Pentecost profitable? 6. What are the implications of the day of Pentecost for us?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. What is "the Great Commission"? 2. As spoken to us, what stands for Jerusalem in 1.8? 3. For Judea and Samaria? 4. For the uttermost part of the earth? 5. During this last year, how much has your class contributed to missions? 6. What other missionary work has been done by us? 7. What further work can we do?

Damascus with Its Great Mosque
The City to Which Paul was Journeying See Lesson VI

THIRD QUARTER

THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY

Studies in the Acts, the Epistles, and the Revelation

(First Half of a Six-Months' Course)

LESSON I—JULY 5

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

GOLDEN TEXT: Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Acts 1.8

LESSON Acts 1.6-14; 2.1-47 DEVOTIONAL READING John 16.7-14

ACTS 1.6 They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority. 8 But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. 9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

2.1 And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speaking in his own language. 7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying, Behold, are not all these that speak Galilæans? 8 And how hear we, every man in our own language wherein we were born?

Map illustrating the
ACTS of the APOSTLES
and the EPISTLES
SCALE OF MILES
0 50 100 150 200
1st Journey of Paul the Apostle
2nd " " " " "
3rd " " " " "
Journey to Rome of Paul the Apostle
Longitude East from Greenwich
ROME
Three Taverns
Market of Appius
Capua
Via Appia
Puteoli
ITALY
Apennines
ADRIATIC SEA
Dyrrachium
Brundisium
Tarentum
IONIAN SEA
SICILY
Messina
Rhegium
Syracuse
MELITA (MALTA)
DALMATIA
MOESIA
THRACE
BLACK SEA
Sangarius R.
Byzantium
Propontis (Sea of Marmora)
BITHYNIA AND PONTUS
PAPHLAGONIA
Halys R.
Tavium
KINGDOM OF POLEMON
GALATIA
Ancyra
Pessinus
ASIAN PHRYGIA
Road to the East
Iconium
Lystra
Derbe
Tarsus
Taurus Mts.
KINGDOM OF ANTIOCHUS
COMMAGENE
CAPPADOCIA
Cæsarea
Tyana
Antitaurus Range
Cilician Gates
Syrian Gates
Antioch
Seleucia
Cydnus R.
CILICIA
SYRIA AND PHŒNICIA
Lebanon Mts.
Laodicea
Tripolis
Sidon
Tyre
Damascus
Ptolemais
Cæsarea
Samaria
Joppa
Lydda
Jerusalem
KINGDOM OF HEROD
Alexandria
EGYPT
LIBYA
CYRENE
Cyrene
MACEDONIA
Via Egnatia
ILLYRICUM
Pindus Range
Beroea
Olympus
Mt.
Thessalonica
Amphipolis
Apollonia
Philippi
Neapolis
SAMOTHRACE
ACHAIA
OR GREECE
Corinth
Cenchreæ
Athens
Gulf of Corinth
EGEAN SEA
LESBOS
Mitylene
CHIOS
SAMOS
PATMOS
COS
Cnidus
RHODES
Patara
Myra
Troas
Assos
Mt. Ida
MYSIA
Adramyttium
Pergamum
Thyatira
Sardis
Philadelphia
Apamea
Hierapolis
Laodicea
Colossæ
Smyrna
Ephesus
Magnesia
Miletus
CARIA
LYDIA
ASIA
Antioch
PISIDIA
PAMPHYLIA
Perga
Side
Attalia
Cestrus R.
LYCIA
CILICIA TRACHEIA
Phœnice
CAUDA
CRETE
C. Salmone
Fair Havens
CYPRUS
Salamis
Paphos
MEDITERRANEAN SEA

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Introduction of The Acts: the Fact of the Resurrection, 1.1-5.

II. Christ's Reply to a Question, 1.6, 7. The disciples had had their vision of their Risen Lord, and now it seems that he manifested himself to them once more before his final departure. The question which had engrossed much of their thoughts during his life with them was still uppermost in their minds, and now that he was alive after his crucifixion, must it not be that he would restore the kingdom of Israel, become king of an independent Jewish state? This they asked him. "They argued—and doubtless we in their place had argued, too—that nothing would be of such great service to them as definite knowledge of the part they were to play in the opening picture."

"It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority," was the answer of Christ. "Are there few that shall be saved?" once they had asked him, and he was silent. "Lord, what shall this man do?" Peter had queried about John, after Jesus had revealed to him that he himself should die a martyr's death, and Jesus had replied, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." So now, in answer to their question of curiosity, he replies, "It is not for you to know." Jesus refused to give the kind of knowledge that would gratify the curiosity or the intellect, but he never was silent regarding matters of conduct.

> "What the disciples asked of Christ was a complete road-map of the future. We also would like a complete chart of truth. The reply of Christ is, 'It is not for you to know,' and the reply may be interpreted in two ways. It clearly means that this kind of knowledge is not within the competence of man, man being what he is, and his mental constitution what it is. And it means also that this kind of knowledge is not only not necessary to man, but it would be hurtful to him.
>
> "In a great campaign offering many battles, and full of new movements dictated by new occasions, it is not necessary that every private soldier should be in complete possession of the plans of his leaders. It would be of no advantage to him, and in all probability it would prove to be a great hindrance and disadvantage. The work of the private soldier is definite and limited; it is to do the thing that needs must be done at the moment, and it is the very limitation of his task that makes him successful in it. It is not for him to debate questions of strategy; it is for him to have confidence in the supreme strategist who directs the movements of the strife. Even so we fight as private soldiers in the long Armageddon of human life. We fight upon limited knowledge, seeing only certain things that must be done, duties that lie close at hand, acts demanded by honor and conscience, and to do these things is to find our little lives fitted into the divine rhythm of the world's progress. It is for us to act by the light we have; it is not for us to know" (W. J. Dawson).

III. The World Task, 1.8. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you. "They were all thinking about 'kingdoms,' but the kingdom of the disciples was a little, vanishing splendor, while the Kingdom of Christ was the whole universe and purpose of God." "His answer implies that he will restore the Kingdom to Israel; not, however, to 'Israel after the flesh,' as the apostles imagined, but to 'the Israel of God,' that is, to Christian believers of every nation, by making Christianity the dominant religion throughout the world" (Dummelow).

And ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. "The missionary enterprise is not the Church's afterthought; it is Christ's forethought" (Henry van Dyke). Four missionary zones there are, which some one has called parish missions, state missions, home missions, and foreign missions. The book of the Acts records the carrying out of this commission, "the uttermost part of the earth" being represented by Rome, the capital of the Empire, the place where, as Irenæus said, "All met from every quarter." Chapters 1-7 tell the story of the mission in Jerusalem; chapters 8.1 to 9.35, in all Judea and Samaria; chapters 11.19 to 28.30, the work beyond Palestine.

"Many persons tell us to pray for power, but, though prayer is good, there is another duty to perform in order to get power: we must harness ourselves to a task that requires it. To turn power into an engine that has no 'load' is ruinous; when a ship pitches and the propeller comes above the water line the engines race, and the whole ship trembles. God does not waste power by giving it to the man who has no hard task" (The Youth's Companion).

IV. The Departure, 1.9-11. Recall our lesson two weeks ago.

V. Waiting and Praying, 1.12-14. The apostles, together with Mary, the mother of Jesus, and other women and brethren, returned to Jerusalem and, in the Upper Room where they were wont to meet, with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer.

"Turn back and read your church history. You will find periods when thoughtful men and women sat for hours, sometimes for days and weeks, in caves and cloisters, in their churches or in their homes, listening for the voice of God. They listened until they heard—and he spoke peace to their hearts. Travel now in the Orient and you will see men sitting as motionless as if they were carved from stone, looking into space to see the face of God. They finally see him, and are ofttimes changed into the same image. It is not an attitude to be held permanently; that would make your life barren: but as a preparation and discipline for the life which follows, these periods of waiting upon the source of all strength, for the renewal of our strength, have unspeakable worth" (Charles R. Brown).

VI. Empowered for the World Task, 2.1-4. The word Pentecost means "the fiftieth day feast"; it received its name because observed fifty days after the third day of the Passover, Lev. 23.15. On the day of Pentecost following Christ's crucifixion, ten days after his departure, the disciples were together in Jerusalem still waiting for the promised coming of the Holy Spirit, for which they had been praying.

"'Together in one place' might better be rendered 'together in company, or in fellowship.' It is the unity of heart and mind that is to be emphasized and not the mere presence of all in one place. We may find this exemplified in every age. It was true of the Moravians at Herrnhut, it was true of the Covenanters in Scotland, it was true of the Waldenses in their mountain fastnesses, it was true of the societies founded by John Wesley and others. It is not necessary to search for any mysterious reason why the blessing of the Spirit can come only by a united body of believers. The outstanding fact is that Christianity is a social force, and the fundamental requirement of such a movement is unity, not especially because it is Christianity, but because it is social."

Suddenly there came a sound which was not that of wind (but a mighty, rushing wind was the only thing to which Luke could compare it) which filled the house. Compare 1 K. 19.11-13; Jn. 3.8. And they saw something which was not fire, but could only be compared to tongues of fire resting upon each one.

And they all, not the apostles only but the one hundred and twenty followers of Christ there present, were filled with the Holy Spirit, "filled as a sponge dipped into the sea is filled with the ocean." This is the great fact of Pentecost. The symbols which were like wind and like fire disappeared after a time; the accompanying gift of "speaking with tongues" was also transient, but the Spirit's presence was abiding, and by his aid they were enabled to fulfill their great commission of proclaiming Jesus Christ and the power of his resurrection.

They began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance: their words were inspired by the Spirit, and were of a different nature from their customary words. It is a disputed question whether they spoke in languages which they had not before known, or whether their utterances were enthusiastic and ecstatic, the "gift of tongues" such as is described in the fourteenth chapter of First Corinthians. A sensible remark of Chrysostom's

in regard to the latter passage is pertinent here: "The whole passage is obscure, but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to, being such as used to occur, but now no longer take place."

"On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit wonderfully revealed himself to the disciples, filled them with a new consciousness of his divine presence, and blessed them. That is, in the midst of a world which is full of God, suddenly this little company of holy persons were made aware of God. Out of the infinite silence, God spoke to them. And it was as if the wind blew which swept across the face of Elijah in the cleft of the rock; it was as if the fire blazed amongst them which Elijah saw before he heard the still, small voice. This is as near as the narrator can get to it."

"The Church has been a polyglot institution from the day of its birth. The throng which came together on Pentecost to learn the meaning of the strange thing that was happening heard 'every man in his own language—Parthians, Medes, Elamites, dwellers in Mesopotamia and in Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia,' and all the rest. Whatever it was that actually occurred, the central fact is that the gospel came through many channels to diverse individuals. The cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York has radiating from its choir a series of chapels—a perfect chaplet of chapels crowning the majestic head of the great church—all dedicated to services in different languages. The idea is beautiful as well as practical, and suggestive as well as beautiful. For these things are a parable. The Church today needs the gift of tongues in another sense. As Dr. Eugene Shippen has said: 'I visualize the church of the free spirit as a cathedral having many language chapels united by common ties of human need and aspiration. Let those who speak the language of theology or science, mysticism or reform, philanthropy or humanism, or symbolism, try to understand the universal language of the spirit, of which these tongues are dialects. Religion must find expression in all forms and modes without losing its spiritual character. The universal Church, the holy Catholic Church, is all these, and above all it is spiritual. It must be all things to all men, and ample as the wants of men.' This is well said. Those who stand outside may find confusion in the diversity of the tongues rather than harmony in the common message, and scoff at all the speakers as full of new wine, but the Church must know how to find unity in its diversities" (The Christian Century).

VII. The Effect upon the Observers, 2.5-13.

VIII. Peter's Sermon and its Effect, 2.14-42.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Like as of fire, 2.3. That unusual appearances of fire were considered emblems of the presence and influence of God, both the Scriptures and the Jewish writings amply prove. Thus God manifested himself to Moses, when he appointed him to deliver Israel, Ex. 3.2, 3, and thus he manifested himself when he delivered the law on Mount Sinai, Ex. 19.16-20. The Jews, in order to support the pretenses of their rabbis as delivering their instructions by divine authority and influence, represent them as being surrounded by fire while delivering their lectures; and their words, in consequence, as penetrating and exhilarating the souls of their disciples. Some of the Mohammedans represent divine inspiration in the same way. Nor was this notion of the manner in which divine intimations were given peculiar to the Jews and Arabs; it exists in all countries; and the glories which appear round the heads of Chinese, Hindu, and Christian saints were simply intended to signify that they had especial intercourse with God, and that his Spirit, under the emblem of fire, sat upon them and became resident in them. The Greeks and Romans had similar notions of the way in which divine communications were given. Everything of this kind was probably borrowed from the account given by Moses of the appearance on Mount Sinai, for traditions of this event were carried through almost every part of the habitable world.—Adam Clarke, in Commentary on the New Testament.

The day of Pentecost, 2.1. When a person dies, and the mourners return

from the funeral, they all have to eat a hard-boiled egg dipped in ashes. It represents death. On the day of Pentecost the egg is painted red, signifying that a live thing will come out of it. It is thus a sign of resurrection.—Leon Levison.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

For those who are tempted to consider Pentecost as an isolated phenomena, Bishop Francis J. McConnell bids us think of all the long lines of preparation —the months of training of the disciples in the band of Jesus, the days of assembling together in the upper room to provide for the ongoing of the work of the Risen Christ, the centuries upon centuries of divine leading of Israel which would make it possible for groups like those in the Jerusalem streets to understand and yield to a speech like that of Peter. Pentecost was really the swift crowning of spiritual processes which had worked quietly for months and years and centuries. Pentecost would have been impossible without the long previous religious training of individuals and of a nation.

The term "Whitsunday" for "Pentecost" is supposed to have been derived from the white robes worn by persons baptized on the eve of Pentecost.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

One last thought from the method of Jesus as a Teacher. How shall we solve our difficulties of doctrine, or the difficulties which our pupils bring to us,—speculative difficulties, difficulties which arise from unsatisfied intellectual curiosity? Shall we not realize the limitations of the human mind, and be content that it is not for us to unlock all mysteries and all knowledge?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

EMPOWERED FOR A WORLD TASK

Beginning the Lesson. For Peter and John and the rest to begin to win the world for Christ after the ascension of their Lord required more than human power. They were to herald great mysteries; they were to convince others that Jesus is the Son of God, that he was sent from heaven to take upon himself human nature, that he lived and taught as they alone could fully testify, that he willingly suffered death on the cross for the salvation of the world, and that he had arisen from the dead and ascended into heaven. Jesus Christ and the power of his resurrection was a theme at which the world would stumble. Only through power given them from on high could these human instruments accomplish their divinely given task.

Firm in their faith, true in their fellowship, and steadfast in their prayers, the followers of Christ awaited for ten days the fulfillment of the promise. Then the blessing came. How is it described by Luke?

Continue with Explanations and Comments.

Is the Holy Spirit a Metaphysical Mystery to Many People? Dr. Richard Roberts asserts that when the Third Person in the Trinity was classified and labeled, he became a mystery to ordinary folk. "Not that the doctrine of the Trinity is not important: it is the only reasonable way we have of conceiving of God as being above us, with us, in us, as being one with us, yet other than us, of being wholly perfect in himself. But it is evidently only an academic formula, a mere intellectual conclusion to the man who does not have in his own religious experience the living elements that called for the doctrine. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit will remain an embarrassment for most of us until we have recaptured the spiritual experience which gives it its meaning. We need only to read with intelligence the first few chapters of the Acts, for there we have not to do with doctrines of any kind, but with a living experience of God. We meet men who do not try to explain the Holy Spirit, but who let the Holy Spirit have his way with them."

What Made Pentecost Possible? To find the answer in the Scriptures it is necessary to ask to whom the experience came, what there was distinctive in these people, what former experiences they had been through which would have bearing upon this experience, and many other questions of like import.

In other words, we must go back through the Gospels and find the disciples actively participating in one of the most remarkable schools of religious education in all history. The teaching of precepts was only a very small part in that school, there being the far more important teaching by example, training in action, and inspiring fellowship. After all these centuries, in another day of emphasis on religious education, I know of no course being offered today that would compare in intensiveness with the Master's School of Discipleship.

The schooling continued in the form of a most remarkable "refresher course." We do not know how many days the disciples tarried in the upper room in Jerusalem. We know that none of them lived there. What went on in that little room before the fire fell? If we could answer that question it would throw much light upon Pentecost. Can you not readily see that the most natural attitude in this refresher course would be to ask over and over again, what it was that Jesus said about this, and what did he say about that?

Of course we must not overlook the place that "prayer and supplication" had in this preparation for Pentecost. Every refresher course must have that. But all too often these words have been employed to suggest that prayer is the only key to an understanding of Pentecost. This is a great mistake. What is prayer? Is not true prayer for the disciple putting himself at the disposal of God? And, other things being equal, is not a trained and efficient self more useful to God when consecrated to his work than an untrained and haphazard self? In this experience of the disciples they laid before the Lord each his gift of a consecrated life, after they had been thoroughly grounded in the faith which they were later to proclaim by word and example. This does not show that consecration should follow training, but only that training makes consecration count for more than it otherwise could. One must consecrate oneself as much to the Lord's training as later to the work for which one has been called and prepared.—Condensed from an Article in the Indian Witness, by Ralph T. Temple.

What Made Pentecost Profitable? When the "fire fell" it found something to burn in Peter's heart, at least, and he quickly became the flaming evangelist of the occasion. Let us look at the story itself as recorded in Acts.

One very apparent fact is that as the day began and as many of those present were beginning to be affected, it bade fair to prove an exceedingly unprofitable occasion.

First, the manifestation created wonderment, amazement. We have only a swift sketch of those events, but enough to show plainly that the people were at first impressed that something unusual, "freakish," was happening. About the only value there could be in that was to draw a crowd. That is exactly what happened.

Second, the manifestation created the impression in some people that these men were drunk with wine.

The third result was preceded by the preaching of Peter. He evidently thought it was time to save the situation from hopeless disaster, and bring something of value out of the occasion for the Kingdom of God. Run through the address of Peter and see how again and again he had recourse to the knowledge gained in the Master's School. Recourse to Jewish history, establishment of contacts through such means, the directness of his appeal, the barb which produced conviction, the assurance with which the remedy was applied, all indicated a mind intelligent, trained, ready, as well as utterly consecrated. God speaking through one man's intelligent tongue saved the situation that day for Christianity and for the world.

The conversion and baptism of the three thousand was not the most important result of Pentecost. What happened to Peter and others to whom the Spirit came with power seems to me the significant factor. And the conserving of this result I believe to have been the most important follow-up work of Pentecost. Pentecost, when rightly understood, stands as the great commencement day, the time when God placed his approval upon the thorough preparation and utter consecration of these men to the work which had challenged them, and gave them the complete assurance of his power for

their services to be now rendered in his name.—Condensed from an Article by Ralph T. Temple, in the Indian Witness.

Empowered for a World Task. The first overwhelming impression that I have gained from a recent study of the Book of Acts is that of the amazing inadequacy of the people whose words and deeds are reported in the book for the impossible task to which they set themselves. These people were quite ordinary; at first there was not a scholar, not a nobleman, not a rich man, among them. They were chiefly peasants and fisher-folk. They passed through an experience which transfigured them. Ordinary men were raised to a pitch so much above their natural selves that at their word thousands were brought over to them. Weak men were transfigured into fearless leaders; nonentities appeared as strong, generative giants; and things happened at their touch and their word that broke through the normal frontiers of experience. Some assumed an unheard-of stature, personal capacity outstripped all recognized measures; life seemed to have made a leap to an astonishingly higher level.

And the historical consequences are obvious in the story. Judaism was surrounded by a Hindenburg line, which neither friend nor enemy could easily pass. No stranger could, without great difficulty, enter the Jewish lines; no Jew could leave his own line without a grievous price. But there was that little company with secret orders to advance waiting for the signal. And the signal came; they rushed the trenches and swept out into No Man's Land; step by step they passed on through the barbed-wire entanglements which guarded the old line, and, though some of their old comrades were harrying them in the rear, they swept on until they reached and rushed and captured the defenses of the Gentile world. And that is how it has come to pass that you and I are here today.

The word "power" is written over the whole story; and they themselves said it was the Holy Spirit. But, whatever name you give to it, there the experience itself is. And we haven't had it. And God knows we need it. This apostolic experience was first of all, I imagine, a release from inhibitions, from the private superstitions of weakness and incapacity that keep us bound and futile. There was Peter, trying to look inconspicuous in some corner of the high priest's court-house, quailing before a servant-maid's accusing tongue and collapsing into a disgraceful denial of his Lord. He was being inhibited by fear; but the Spirit swept the inhibition away, and a few weeks later there Peter stands, in the same place, confronted this time, not by maids and lackeys, but by their honors themselves, standing his ground, a gentleman unafraid. And that same deliverance the Spirit will work for us, if we will submit to him, unloosing our captive forces and bringing us nearer our appointed stature.—Condensed from an Address by Richard Roberts Given, at a Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement.

Infinite Resources Available for Our World Task. The task is indeed appalling; but on the other side are the resources of the Infinite. Take China with her countless millions, equalling the numbers in the United States and Europe combined, throw into the scale India, Africa, Japan and the islands of the Sea, and we have nine hundred millions of the unevangelized; recall that it has taken ninety-five generations of Christian workers, nineteen hundred years of time, millions upon millions of lives and billions upon billions of dollars to bring Europe and America up to the point of civilization which we have thus far reached; remember further, that we cannot separate evangelization from Christianization, that God will not let us rest even when we have carried the message of salvation to the last human being on earth, but that we must help transform the kingdoms of this world into the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ.

Now, put upon the other side of the scales, not our finite resources but the infinite resources of Almighty God, and if your soul has faith to catch the vision of the unseen, you will say: "Those that are for us are more than they that be against us." It is only as the problem drives us to God; it is only as the Church hides in him, seeks from him wisdom and grace and power for the task, that there is the slightest hope of success. But if we seek for the divine resources placed at our command, if we avail ourselves of the power

of prayer, of the indwelling of the Spirit, of the consecration of men and women and money which the Holy Spirit will inspire, and realize that our task is not to conquer nine hundred millions for Christ or even a single soul, but simply to obey Christ and let him make the conquest, then the task becomes an exceedingly simple one, because the commission is preceded by the assurance that all authority in heaven and earth is given to Christ and is followed by his promise that he will be with us to the end.—Adapted from God's Missionary Plan for the World, by J. W. Bashford.

Four Questions for You. How long would it take to make my community really Christian if every other follower of Christ worked at it and prayed about it just as I do?

How long would it take to make my whole nation really Christian if all Christians gave their prayers and efforts and money toward it just as I am doing?

How long would it take to make disciples of all the nations if all other Christians were to give this great program of Christ the place in their lives that it has in mine?

Have I any moral right to expect or demand of other Christians, or even of preachers and missionaries, any service for Christ that I am unwilling to give myself?

The work of winning the world to Christ is my work as really and fully as it is the work of any one else. Let me not avoid it nor shirk it.—J. Campbell White.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. It is not for you to know: human limitations.

2. The work of the Holy Spirit today. See The Christ of Every Road, by E. Stanley Jones.

3. John R. Mott has declared that an alarming weakness among Christians is that we are producing Christian activities faster than we are producing Christian experience and Christian faith; that the discipline of our souls and the deepening of our acquaintance with God are not proving sufficiently thorough to enable us to meet the unprecedented expansion of opportunity and responsibility of our generation. What bearing upon this has our lesson?

4. The very soul of our religion is missionary, progressive, world-embracing: it would cease to exist if it disregarded the parting words of its Founder.—Max Müller.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What explanation of the cure of the cripple at the Beautiful Gate did Peter give the multitude? 2. To what results did the cure lead? 3. Why did the rulers object to the healing of the lame man? 4. What scenes in Christ's life are recalled by this event? 5. What must have been the effect of Peter's words in verse 9? 6. In verse 10? 7. Where in the Old Testament is the quotation of verse 11 found? 8. In what ways is Peter magnificent in this scene?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE COMING OF NEW POWER

Beginning the Lesson. In the Great War, General Stanley Maude, surmounting seemingly insurmountable obstacles, saved the Mesopotamian campaign from disaster, and took Bagdad. When he lay dying of cholera he roused himself long enough to say to his secretary, "Tell them I can't come to the office today; they must just 'carry on.'"

Two weeks ago we learned how such an order to "carry on" came to Peter and John and the other disciples after the resurrection of their Great Commander. Today our first selection from the Book of the Acts gives a second account of the order given and the power promised. Who wrote it? Who wrote the words which we studied two weeks ago?

Continue with Explanations and Comments.

The Power of the Spirit. Our word "spirit" comes from the Latin "spiro," which means "breath." We have a number of other words which have been derived from this same root—respiration, aspiration, inspiration. The breath was once thought to be the seat of life; as long as a man breathed, his soul, his spirit was in him. The Bible speaks of the Spirit of the Lord coming upon

one and another of its characters so that they were enabled to carry out his purpose for them. What they could not do alone, they could do when God gave them his Spirit. The prophet Joel speaks of God as declaring, "It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you," Jesus promised, and the promise was fulfilled.

What associations have we which have gathered around the word "spirit"? We speak of some one as having no spirit; we say that some musician played with spirit; we report that our friends entered into the spirit of the thing: what do we mean by such expressions?

"Clearly it is something which cannot be measured by our usual measures. It is different from mere technical skill; a violinist may play the notes correctly, and yet without what we call 'spirit.' It is something within the hidden depths of our being. It is clearly a power for which there is no substitute; and it is that very power which makes all the difference between the achievements of men. If a thing is 'spiritless' it fails.

"Why may the knowledge of the Divine Spirit be said to increase? The analogy of other powers and the human familiarity with them may be taken, though always with the proviso that it is only partially true. The first discoverers of the use of electricity had available as possibilities all the later discoveries. The power was there already. Men might have learned to fly much earlier than they did, the materials were there. But the knowledge of these materials, and therefore the use of them, grew as men put their minds into the study, and their skill to the application. Today we live in the presence of the forces which were at the disposal of our fathers; but we have a vastly increased knowledge of them. In the same way the Spirit, given at Pentecost, was the same Spirit which had dealt with Abraham and Moses and the prophets; but now that Spirit through the revelation of Christ had become known in a new fashion."

Waiting for the Promise. Those men and women were waiting for something. There was a divine promise ringing in their ears. "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you." It was as though the risen Lord had said to them: "I am asking you to face a big task. You are to be my witnesses here in this hostile city of Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and in every part of the heathen world. You will have to meet persecution, loneliness, hatred, imprisonment, death. You will encounter the scorn and unbelief of men. The culture of Greece, the power of Rome, the pride of Judaism will all be arrayed against you. You must not attempt the work without the aid of my Spirit. I will clothe you with grace and spiritual power, and go with you to the battle and the witnessing."

Now with a promise like that would it not have been folly for them to begin preaching and teaching in their own strength? They would have failed before they began! Adequate preparation is the secret of all success. This is the lesson the child finds it so hard to learn. He wants to try his hand here and now, and to escape the toil of apprenticeship. But he must learn to wait as well as to work. Knowledge and skill are the reward of patient waiting. Besides, to go on alone means over-confidence in one's own strength and indifference to the Divine. It says much for the humility, faith and patience of these first Christians that they refused to go on alone. Persevering with one mind they waited in this upper room, externally doing nothing, and yet in reality wrestling with God in prayer, and waiting for the power of God to take hold of their weakness and turn it into strength.

God needs our prayers to impart himself to us. They are tools with which he works; and if we cease to pray we take out of God's hands one of the instruments by which he works upon us and others.

We wish to walk with him and to work with him. And our prayers are the expression of this passionate longing. We are sure of ultimate success if he will go with us to the witnessing and the conflict. So our prayers are a proof to Christ that we love him and trust him. They reveal our faith in his promise and in the winsomeness and power of his Spirit.—Condensed from an Editorial in The Sunday School Chronicle.

Setting the Power Free. What drives a train along? It is really the great

black pile of coal, which the fireman continually shovels into the engine's furnace to make the fire that turns the water into the steam that drives the wheels and pulls the great train along. Just black, dull looking coal.

When you see coal would you think that any fire could come out of it? You look at it, and there is no glow at all. You put your hand on it, and it does not seem to have any heat. And yet, you know very well that once this piece of coal is put into a furnace, where a fire has already been kindled, it will turn into fire itself, and all the splendid heat, which you would never guess was in it, will come out and begin to do your work.

Then, isn't it fine to remember that you and I may have just that same sort of thing happen to us, and to all sorts of people we know? Sometimes we seem very dull and useless, just as the piece of coal does. We can hardly imagine that we can ever be good for anything beautiful and strong. It doesn't look as though there were anything remarkable in us at all. But, down in the heart of us, stored up and waiting to be set free, so hidden away sometimes that we can hardly believe it is there—just as we can hardly believe there really is heat in this coal—lives all the power God has put in us and is going to show us how to use.

What is going to set it free? Well, you remember John the Baptist said of Jesus that Jesus would baptize people with fire. When Jesus touches us with his fire, then we are changed like the coals, which glow and burn, and with their splendid heat drive the great wheels of all the world. It is thinking of him, and trying to be like him that turn us also into fire and make us strong to help things move God's way.—Walter Russell Bowie, in The Children's Year.

Ye Shall be My Witnesses at Jerusalem. A young man came to a pastor in the Southern Presbyterian Church and asked for Christian work. By questions the pastor learned how the man's time was employed. He arose at half past six and after breakfast went to his office where he worked steadily, save for a brief lunch period, until six o'clock. After supper he was "too tired to do much."

"When would you do Christian work if I gave it to you?" the pastor questioned. "I don't know." Then the pastor said: "God has so placed you, so filled your day, that I don't see where you can get time for much outside Christian work. But, see here, Murray, here's something for you to do. Do your work better than you ever did. Help the other fellow who is behind, if you can. Let all the men in your office know that you are a Christian, not by talking, but by living. Get in a helpful word here and there. Get some fellow to drop his oaths or his beer. Show Christ living in you and controlling you. Preach the gospel among your associates by the best life you can live with God's help. Will you try?

The young man promised. A few weeks later the superintendent of the department where the young man worked met the pastor, and asked, "What's come over Murray?" "I don't know," the latter replied, "I didn't know anything had." "Well, there has. He's the best influence about the whole place. The men all notice it. He's quiet, earnest, and full of a spirit that imparts itself to others. Something has come over Murray!"

Sentence Sermons. The Holy Spirit is our indwelling Partner.—J. H. Jowett.

Every Christian is at least a minor missionary.—Christina Rossetti.

We cannot believe in God for ourselves without believing in him for the world.—Phillips Brooks.

You are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you.—Jesus.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the entire lesson, Acts 3.1 to 4.31. 2. To whom did Peter ascribe the cure of the lame man? 3. How did Peter show great courage in his reply to the rulers? 4. With Peter's boldness of speech compare Mt. 26.69-75. 5. To what is his fearlessness now ascribed? (Verses 8, 13.) 6. What does verse 11 mean? 7. What is moral courage? 8. How may you gain moral courage? 9. Where did Peter and John go after they were dismissed, and what did they do?

LESSON II—JULY 12

THE PREACHING OF THE APOSTLES

GOLDEN TEXT: We must obey God rather than men. Acts 5.29

LESSON Acts 3.1 to 4.31
1 Corinthians 1.21-25

DEVOTIONAL READING Romans 10.8-15

ACTS 4.1 And as they spake unto the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, 2 being sore troubled because they taught the people, and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in ward unto the morrow: for it was now eventide. 4 But many of them that heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

5 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; 6 and Annas the high priest "was there," and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, By what power, or in what name, have ye done this? 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders, 9 if we this day are examined concerning a good deed done to an impotent man, by what means this man is made whole; 10 be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, "even" in him doth this man stand here before you whole. 11 He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner. 12 And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.

13 Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. 14 And seeing the man that was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. Peter Heals a Lame Man, 3.1-10.

II. Peter's Discourse, in which the Cure is Ascribed to Christ, 3.11-26.

III. The Arrest of Peter and John, 4.1-4. Priests and Sadducees and the captain of the temple were troubled because Peter and John proclaimed the resurrection of Jesus. The captain of the temple was the commander of the temple guard, and was himself a priest second in rank only to the high priest. The Sadducean party, to which the high priestly class at this time belonged, did not believe in the doctrine of a resurrection and, of course, it was especially galling to them to have the apostles teach the people that Jesus had risen from the dead. They arrested the apostles, but because it was too late for a trial that day they had them imprisoned for the night. The result of Peter's preaching, Luke now tells us, was that about five thousand men believed in Christ. No wonder the authorities were startled when men of Jerusalem who had cried "Crucify him," were now convinced that the Crucified was the Risen Savior.

IV. Peter's Boldness before the Sanhedrin, 4.5-12. On the morrow, rulers and elders and scribes, who composed the Sanhedrin, sat in session. The Sanhedrin was the great Jewish tribunal which was supreme in all matters affecting Jewish law, the sentence of death being the only penalty which they might not impose. Annas and Caiaphas, before whom Jesus had been brought a prisoner, Alexander and other great officials were present. The Sanhedrin sat in a semicircle and the prisoners, Peter and John, stood before them. The man whom Peter had healed was also there, as a kind of accessory to the "good deed."

"By what power, or in what name, have ye done this?" the officials demanded. It is interesting here to remind ourselves of two earlier scenes in Peter's life as Dr. J. H. Jowett recalls them. "Here is Peter, a man who had been plastic to circumstances, a man who had received always the impress of the immediate hour, a man of fickle moods and varying whims and caprices, a man of impulse but little constancy, usually choosing the line of least resistance. Take two glimpses of this weak and impulsive man. Well, here is the Master

foretelling the coming gloom and desolation and crucifixion and death. Here is the Master foretelling the chilly approach of an appalling night. And Peter said unto him, 'This shall not be unto thee, Lord. Choose an easier way. Take a more prosperous path to thy Kingdom. Seek thy crown by a more comfortable road. This shall not be unto thee.' And the Lord looked at Peter and said, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' The spirit of Peter shrank and recoiled from the chilling touch of sacrifice and right. I wonder how this man will fare when he comes face to face with antagonism.Here is another glimpse of Peter. The shadows have fallen, the night has come. The Master is to be tried at dawn. In the outer court a fire is burning, and Peter stands tremblingly by to warm himself. And suddenly a servant maid standing there catches a sight of the face of Peter in the transient glare of the fire and immediately says, 'Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.' And quickly and untremblingly Peter replies: 'Woman, I know not the man. I have never known him.' I wonder how the man will fare when he comes face to face with the powerful, threatening resistance of official religion."

© Tissot, 1896-7. Annas and Caiaphas

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit and eager to use the chance thus given him, replied: "Ye rulers of the people [chief priests] and elders [representatives of the Sanhedrin], if we this day are examined concerning a good deed done to an impotent man, by what means this man is made whole [if, like criminals, we are forced to defend ourselves for doing good], be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in him doth this man stand before you whole." Thus Peter answered their question and with superb daring accused them of the crime of having put to death the Lord's Anointed.

"He is the stone which was set at nought of you, the builders, which was made the head of the corner." The stone made the head of the corner is the stone at the angle of two walls which supports and unites them. Had the arch been in common use the figure of the keystone would probably have been employed instead.

"For in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." "We" in the Greek has an emphatic position at the end of the sentence, as has also "ye" in verse seven. By what name have ye, ignorant men, done this? There is no other name wherein we—you the judges and we the fishermen—must be saved.

> "I find a man trying to lift a great stone, which is too heavy for his strength; and I say to him, Get out your tackle and pulleys, and then you can lift it. You cannot move that stone without a tackle and pulley. And no man can take the fruits of civilization unless he lays hold on powers other than his own; and no man can take the fruit of high, noble, divine, moral, spiritual culture unless he reaches out and lays hold of powers that are not his own, that make for righteousness."

The rulers were impressed and startled by Peter's boldness. They explained

his courage by stating that he had been with Jesus. Some scholars interpret this to mean merely that "their wonder sharpened their recollection," as Meyer says, and now, apparently for the first time, they recognize Peter and John as disciples of Jesus. Yet recalling the words of the Jews in regard to Jesus —"How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" John 7.15—it seems rather that they recognized the fact that Peter and John had grown like their Master. What a compliment they paid Jesus in thus admitting that the disciples had caught from him the contagion of courage!

The Greek verb "esan," translated "had been," is in the imperfect tense, and it has been suggested that there is no need of rendering it "they had been"; that there is more of actuality in "they were." The apostles were recognized then and there as being with Jesus, i.e., of Jesus' party. In like manner, we today are reported to agree in the judgments and practices of others—to be "with them." To the Sanhedrin it was immaterial whether the apostles "had been" with Jesus; it was enough for them that the men "were with him."

> "Out of our personal presence men go to be better or poorer because they have taken knowledge of us as the people did of Peter and John. What is the character of the influence that men take from our lives? Is it possible, is it likely, that men are saying, 'There is something about him that reminds me of Jesus'? Is there something about our presence that cannot be explained in any other way than by saying, 'He has been with God'?" (C. S. Cooper).

V. The Apostles Threatened and Dismissed, 4.13-22. The Sanhedrin marveled at the boldness of Peter and John, who, they perceived, were unlearned and ignorant men. The Greek word translated "unlearned" means "without letters"; the apostles were untrained as rabbis. The Greek word translated "ignorant" means literally "private"; they were persons not engaged in public office: perhaps our word "laymen" would give the actual thought of the rulers here. In Greece any man of ability shared in the public life and looked with scorn upon one who remained a "private person."

And seeing the man that was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. They could neither dispute the fact of the cure nor answer the arguments of Peter. Probably it was their practice to send a prisoner away while they deliberated, so now Peter and John were sent aside out of the council. "What must we do with these men?" they questioned. As at the trial of Jesus, so now the Sanhedrin was concerned, not with the truth, but with what they decreed policy for themselves. They couldn't deny the miracle, but they could seek to stop the report of the miracle, "as if that healing were a plague begun, the contagion of which must be stopped," Matthew Henry observes. Accordingly they decided to threaten the apostles, hoping thus to prevent their speaking to any one "in this name."

Peter and John were recalled and were charged not to speak nor teach in the name of Jesus. Respectfully and magnificently Peter replied, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heed."

> "Matthew Arnold has said of the poet Gray that 'he never spoke out.' The conventions of the century in which he lived may have been partly responsible for that, but Arnold was convinced that there was more in the author of the Elegy in a Country Churchyard than ever found utterance in his published verse. Of many Christians the same thing may be said. They never speak out. As the result of either a diffident shyness, or worldly caution, or spiritual uncertainty and hesitation, their lips are sealed, they never express what may be passing in their minds. Disciples of Christ should try to master and subdue this dumb spirit. 'We cannot but speak,' said Peter. Surely, if we owe everything to Jesus Christ, we ought not to be ashamed to say so. The faith of the heart is by nothing more strengthened than by the confession of the lips" (R. H. Coats).

Unable to punish the apostles because of the people, who glorified God for what had been done, the Sanhedrin again threatened them and let them go.

VI. The Apostles' Report to Their Own Company, and Praise and Prayer Follow, 4.23-31.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

When they had set them in the midst, verse 7. Peter and John, and the man who had been lame, stood facing the members of the Sanhedrin, who sat in a semicircle. In the midst of the semicircle, on elevated seats, were the officers—the patriarch, or president, the father of the house of judgment, or vice-president, and the sage, or referee—while the members themselves sat on low cushions, with their knees bent and crossed in the usual Oriental manner. In front of the Sanhedrin sat three rows of disciples. Two scribes, or notaries, one on each side, faced the council; the one registered the reasons for acquittal of prisoners; the other, the reasons for condemnation.

The stone which was set at nought of you the builders, verse 11. The riches hid below the surface of the earth belonged to the Emperor. All quarries were managed and worked by his own private officers for his private use. Every block that was quarried was inspected by the proper officer, and marked by him as approved. Our knowledge of the subject has been for the most part derived from blocks actually found in Rome, and which, therefore, were choice blocks sent to the capital. But at the Phrygian marble quarries there have been found many blocks, which had been cut, but not sent on to Rome. These are never marked as approved; and some of them bear the letters REPR, i.e., "reprobatum," "rejected." These were considered as imperfect and unworthy pieces, and rejected by the inspector.—William M. Ramsey, in Pauline and Other Studies in Early Christianity.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Some months have passed since Pentecost, and the excitement caused by the startling events had begun to die down when Peter and John one day started another wave of amazement, and the first of a long series of persecutions of followers of Christ. They were going to the temple as usual for the evening sacrifice, at three in the afternoon, when they were stopped by the sight of a man lame from birth who was begging in his customary place at the Gate Beautiful of the temple. Read the account in the chapter which precedes our printed text.

The meeting place of the Sanhedrin had been a hall called Gazith, the Hall of Hewn Stones, which was within the temple area; but it is thought that at the time of the arrest of the apostles they met in a hall on Mount Moriah outside the temple precincts.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

The novelist Dostoevsky bids you "every day and every hour, every minute, walk round yourself, and see that your image is a seemly one." The rulers took knowledge of the disciples that they had been with Jesus—to such an extent was the image of their Master reflected in their lives. It is not merely by his words but by the manifestation of his life that a teacher commends both himself and his mission to those whom he teaches. A teacher is a lesson the scholar never forgets. No photographic plate is more sensitive to the image which the sun paints upon it than the child's intelligence to the teacher's example. Nor is it children only who are influenced by the teacher's personality. It was in a Bible Class in India that a Hindu student was asked how he thought that Jesus would come into the room if he were to visit them, and replied, "I think he would come in just as Larsen comes into our class." You are conscientious in the preparation of your lesson, wise and skillful in teaching, zealous in organizing your class, and all this is good, for all this should be done, but when it is all done and well done, it will not avail if you have not been with Jesus yourself.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

APOSTOLIC PREACHING

Beginning the Lesson. We see today how the resurrection and the events of Pentecost had made a new man of Peter. For sheer courage there is noth-

ing in the annals of preaching to exceed the bravery of his words which arraigned the enemies of Christ. It is Peter now plus the power of the Holy Spirit. "In the early days he was timorous, and pliable, and unfaithful. And in the supreme crisis he even denied his Lord. He was altogether lacking in strong, persistent force. But when he had received the power of the Holy Spirit he became steady, positive, effective." All private and selfish interests were forgotten, and he could not but speak the things which he had seen and heard. There are many striking words in this fourth chapter of The Acts: what are some of them?

The Enabling Spirit. God is the source of all spiritual life and force. There is within his Being a never-failing supply of power, sufficient for the needs of all his children. An illustration may help to drive the truth home to our minds. Away in the mountains of North Wales there was a little valley, watered by a tiny river, which was fed in turn by brooks and streamlets running down the hillsides. Years ago there came to that valley engineers who built an enormous dam across its mouth, so that no water could escape. The months went on and by degrees the valley floor was flooded; the water rose, submerging the few scattered dwellings which stood there, until in course of time a great lake, fed by summer rains and winter snows, was formed. Meanwhile some fifty miles of pipes had been laid across the country to connect the lake with the city of Liverpool, with the result today that every drop of water drawn to supply the needs of those who live there comes from the inexhaustible source far away in the Welsh mountains. In the driest summer, when the need is greatest, the reservoir has never failed.

This illustration gives us some faint idea of the unfailing supplies of spiritual force which are in God and which are available for all his children. We, with our little spiritual force, so patently inadequate in face of the difficulties and temptations of our lives, can draw upon inexhaustible supplies which, entering into us, increase and reënforce what we ourselves possess. For it is to be noted that the spiritual force we have is in its essence akin to that which is in God; there is some spark of the divine in each of us. It follows that, when we pray for help, we are not asking him to supply us with some alien force, something utterly foreign to our own nature, so that our personality is put out of action and a mysterious gift from him supplants it. We are rather asking him to pour into our souls the reënforcements which they need, so that our little power may be strengthened and the victory be won.

To some this will seem fanciful and hard to understand. But is it any harder to believe than something with which we are familiar every day? We are all aware of the power of human influence. We have most of us experienced the impact of a stronger personality upon our own. We have a friend of outstanding force of character, and his very friendship deeply affects our lives. It is not what he says to us, though that may help; it is not that we consciously try to imitate him, though we shall be wise to do so; it is just that something seems to pass from him to us, which makes us better, stronger men. We call it influence, and by the very name betray our ignorance of its nature, for "influence" only means something which "flows in." There flows into our personality from his some spiritual force, some part of himself, and to a greater or less degree it affects our character. If that is true in human relationships, if one personality can act upon another in such a way, is it not far more likely to be true of the Supreme Personality which is God? Is it too difficult to believe that he can influence and affect the characters of men, as men can do with one another?

There are many channels through which the Spirit can enter our lives and bring us the help we need. But there is one condition which is indispensable. We must desire his help, and do what in us lies to make contact with the divine. If the time comes when we are so engrossed with material things that the divine has ceased to have any meaning for us and we are content to live as though there were no God, then we shall by our own deliberate choice be excluding him from our lives and making it impossible for him to come to us.—C. S. Woodward, in Christ in the Common Ways of Life.

The Content of Apostolic Preaching. This claim of Peter represents the

essential claim of Christ's Church still. At the very heart of the Christian Church, making it a Church, kindling its passions, prompting its evangelistic labors, lending to those labors intensity and urgency, there lies this conviction that in Jesus Christ it possesses the one cure for the world's woe.

Note the uncompromising exclusiveness of Peter's claim. Peter invests Christ with an absolutely solitary and unshared significance. To Peter there are not half a dozen redeemers, there are not half a dozen ways of salvation; to him there is but one way and one saving Name. Peter is narrow, uncompromising, intolerant, upon this point.

It was this intolerance of primitive Christianity that involved it in all the persecutions through which it had to pass. Rome, as you know, was quite indulgent and peculiarly tolerant to the many religions it found in the various lands that it conquered. It took them under its wing; it extended to them its sanction and its patronage. All the national religions of the lands that Rome conquered became allowed religions; that is, religions practiced with the good will, sanction and approval of the State. Rome would have done much the same thing to Christianity had the Christians been willing. Those of you who know your Gibbon will remember that he tells us about Alexander Severus, one of the Roman emperors, how he placed in his domestic chapel the statues of Abraham, of Orpheus, of Appolonius and of Jesus Christ side by side, as an honor, Gibbon says in his own rather pompous way, "to these respectable sages who had instructed mankind in the various modes of addressing their homage to the supreme and universal Deity." That illustrates the temper of Rome.

The Christians were exposed to the fierce persecutions of the early centuries, they were stoned and burned and sawn asunder and slain with the sword just because they were not content to reckon Christ as a "respectable sage," because they were not willing to put Orpheus and Appolonius and Abraham on the same plane as he, because they were not satisfied that Christianity should be regarded as just one means, one method of approaching God.

The claim is that there is salvation in none other than Jesus Christ. Now what exactly does salvation mean? It is a very wealthy word and consequently hard to define. But I think if you will look in your New Testament you will find two main conceptions of salvation. They are not contradictions at all; they are complementaries.

In John's Gospel the main conception of salvation, the main thing in it, is the knowledge of God. "This is life eternal," to "know . . . the only true God." The main thing in the Pauline conception is deliverance from the pain and penalty and power of sin. Now it is only in Jesus Christ we get the knowledge of God, and it is only in Jesus Christ we get deliverance from sin.

These two things Christ does for us: he delivers us from our sins; he gives us the "Spirit of sonship, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." And the man who is thus loosed from his sins and who knows God as his Father is a saved man. But it is through Christ alone we get those blessings. Do you know anywhere else they can be had? Do you know anyone else who can give them? "In none other is there salvation: . . . neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved."

The comment of history is that Christ does save now, he saves everywhere, he saves everybody. Nobody disputes the fact that Christ does deliver men from sin. When they saw the man that was healed standing there, they could say nothing against it. And when we see the men whom Christ has released from the bondage of sin, when we see them before our eyes, we can say nothing against it.—J. D. Jones.

Rejecting the Essential. He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner. No merely ornamental stone, but a stone that binds, and confirms, and renders the entire building compact. This is the stone which gives solidarity and permanence to the structure. This stone the builders had "set at nought." They had rejected the essential! They had put on one side the very necessity for their own work. They were seeking to build a kingdom, and they left out the King!

Is it not a modern folly? Do not we in our own time endeavor to build strongly, and yet leave out the Almighty?

What are we trying to build? A home? What do the builders take for their materials? What makes a home? Is it all a matter of paint and paper and furniture? Does it consist in many and well-ordered rooms, with every cupboard in the house containing its needful equipment? Shall we add a little sentiment, and sentiment of a refined and lofty type? Will these constitute a home? No, out of these materials no home of stability and permanence can be raised.

What does the Lord want to do with our homes? It is the purpose of his life that he be built into our home, and form the essential part in all its life and manifold affairs. He proclaims that the blessedness of the home depends upon his presence.

What are we building? A nation? And what are the builders putting into it? Armaments and soldiers, ships and guns? Tariff defenses and walls of retaliation? Are we emphasizing mere skill and push and cleverness? Is this all? Then we are rejecting the essential.

If we mean the national structure to be sound and strong and permanent, we must build Christ into our national ideals and policies and ambitions. Let us build Christ into our laws, into the administration of our laws, into our treaties with kindred States, into all our dealings with inferior peoples.—Condensed from a Sermon, by J. H. Jowett.

For Bible Class Discussion. How the church reveals the Lord: verse 13. Dr. Jowett questions, "Can we say that the great characteristic of our modern discipleship is its boldness, and that by the very vim and pulse of our living we arrest the world in wonder?" and then expresses his fear that "we are creating vast numbers of pulpy Christians who are destitue of strong backbone."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Was the communism of the early church due in part to the expectation that Christ would speedily appear? 2. Compare the practice of the early church with communism as it has been practiced in modern times. 3. Who were the Grecian Jews? 4. What work in our church corresponds to "the serving of tables" in the early church? 5. What share have you in that work? 6. What qualities are essential in those who have charge of the business activities of a church? 7. What do you think of Paul's stirring up a spirit of emulation in generous giving? 8. How is 2 Cor. 9.6 true as regards giving?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

TWO BRAVE PREACHERS

Beginning the Lesson. It is no wonder that the Jewish rulers were troubled because the apostles proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. If Jesus had indeed arisen, then was he the Messiah, and then were they guilty of having put to death their King. The people were believing the witnessing of the apostles; the membership of the new sect was growing. "If we let him alone, all men will believe on him," the rulers had said after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Now after the apostles had raised up the lame man, if they were let alone, would not all men believe in them and in Jesus as the Christ?

Who will tell the story of the cure of the lame man? What did the rulers then do? What question did they ask of Peter? What was Peter's answer? Why was Peter very brave in speaking as he did?

We Must Obey God rather than Men. "Stubborn" comes from a good old English word, "stub," meaning the short stump of a tree, from which all the branches have long since been broken or cut off. The wind has no effect upon it. There the "stub" stands, firm and immovable, almost like a rock. Now, if you think a moment, it will dawn upon you what the real meaning of "stubborn" is.

Think of Peter having become a "stub." You remember what a cowardly fellow he showed himself one night. Now a great change has come over him. He is "stubborn." When told that a certain course adopted by him is disapproved of, he stands firm and says, "We must obey God rather than men." The resurrection of Jesus taught Peter many a lesson. He knew that his present action might mean giving up his life. But while he looked at the

magistrates, and knew that the Roman government was behind them, he remembered that on his side was the King of kings. "We must obey God rather than men," he said.

Lying before a fire in an American log cabin, a little "stubborn" fellow committed to memory the four Gospels, Æsop's Fables, and Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. When he was nineteen, he saw a young girl sold at public auction, and told his brother that if he ever had a chance he would hit slavery the hardest blow he could. Several years later he was elected a Senator and later a President. Many Americans who love Lincoln's memory—for it was he—think that the name of Abraham Lincoln will one day be mentioned alongside of Julius Cæsar, Paul, Shakespeare, and —must we ourselves add?—Peter. What made Lincoln "stubborn" was that God had written a law of love in his heart. His motto was, "I must obey God rather than men."—The Children's Great Texts of the Bible.

Two Other Brave Preachers. John Bunyan, the author of Pilgrim's Progress, was put in prison because he preached the gospel, and was threatened with banishment from the country if, on his release, he continued to preach. Bold words were those which he spoke to his persecutors: "If I were out of prison today, I would preach the gospel again tomorrow, by the help of God."

When Eliot, the Apostle to the Indians, was opposed by the Indians he said to them as he resolutely gazed at their threatening faces: "I am about the work of the great God, and my God is with me; so I fear neither you nor all the sachems in the country."

Martin Luther's Bravery. Pope Leo X was seriously disturbed. Letters from Germany told of one Martin Luther, a monk, and Doctor in Wittenberg University, who had dared to challenge his authority to sell Pardons. His face grew dark with anger as tidings kept coming concerning the "ninety-five reasons" which were now being spread in printed pamphlets all over Germany.

At first it seemed to the Pope a simple thing to get rid of the troublesome monk. All he had to do was to command his presence in Rome—and there were a thousand ways he knew of by which Martin Luther could be prevented from seeing his native land again. But the Pope did not know either Luther or the thousands of young men in Germany whose hero he was.

"The monk Martin Luther is commanded to appear in Rome within sixteen days!" If necessary Luther would not shirk any danger that would serve the Truth; but he refused to be lured to Rome and left in a dungeon to die. Luther well knew what his refusal to go to Rome must mean. Henceforth his steps were dogged by the Pope's spies, and his words searched for something that might prove him a "heretic." Meanwhile Luther preached to crowds that hung eagerly on his words. The truth that each man, woman and child may come direct to the Heavenly Father, and through faith in Christ receive pardon for sin, spread through Germany like a new and lovely hope. We who have known these things all our lives cannot realize how new and sweet and strange the message was. And Luther's words were printed and eagerly read. They were sown like living seed in Germany and other lands.

It was the year 1520. A band of messengers from Rome rode to Germany bringing an important document from His Holiness the Pope. It was a Bull of Excommunication against Martin Luther. (The name "Bull" comes from "bulla"—the seals with which it was sealed.)

Soon copies of the Bull were published in many parts of Germany. If Luther would recant, he would be welcomed back to the fold, it said. If he were obstinate, then the fate of a heretic awaited him. And wherever his writings were found they were to be burned. With the Bull came threats to the princes of Germany. Those who protected Luther would find their lands under the ban of the Pope, and liable to be destroyed by his armies.

Then Martin Luther came to a bold decision. Clearly now he saw the truth that a wicked Pope could not be Christ's servant, nor have any authority over his Church. It meant a fierce battle for Luther, a poor monk, to disown publicly the authority of the greatest ruler in the world. But alone he sought and obtained courage for his deed.

It was a December morning in 1520. Tidings had leaked out among the

students that that day Luther would publicly burn the Pope's Bull. A great bonfire was lighted at the city gate. All Wittenberg gathered to watch a deed that meant a monk had challenged the Pope. Solemnly Luther walked towards the fire and threw onto it, not only the Bull, but the false writings on which the Pope's claim for power was based. Students sang the 'Te Deum." A thrill ran through the world at the tidings.

The great "Parliament" of Germany (called the "Diet") was to meet in the old city of Worms in 1521. The monk Martin Luther was called.

"Do not go," begged Luther's friends. Thousands of young men were eager for their hero to defy the world. They would band themselves to protect him. They had no faith in the word of Emperor or Prince that promised safe conduct. But Luther was determined to bear witness to the Truth.

In those days it was a long journey by covered cart from Wittenberg on the Elbe to Worms on the Rhine. All the way Luther was welcomed by groups of thankful folk to whom his teachings had brought the light. With tears they saw him depart, they thought to death. As he drew near the city a warning reached him from a powerful Prior. Even his own friendly Prince could not protect him once he entered Worms. "Were there as many devils in Worms as there are tiles on the roofs, I would go!" he replied. So Luther came into the city.

In the center of the assembly sat the Emperor. Ranged about him were princes, prelates, rulers. On the table were copies of Luther's books and pamphlets. First Luther was allowed to speak, defending his teachings. He felt the power and courage of the Holy Spirit directing his mind so that he spoke boldly and clearly. When the Emperor asked whether he would recant and obey the Pope, he replied: "I am bound by the Scriptures: my conscience is thirled to the Word of God. I may not and will not recant . . . I can do nothing else; here I stand: so help me God! Amen."

Tidings of the monk's stand spread like wildfire through the city, and soon his words were carried in printed pamphlets through Germany. Threatenings were heard in the streets of Worms. "If harm comes to Luther a hundred thousand people will fight for him!" The princes of Germany, even if they did not agree with him, were proud of his boldness. For the first time the young Emperor and the Pope's representatives knew what it was to fear the people. Yet they dared not offend the Pope by acquitting the monk. They drew up a solemn ban allowing Luther twenty days' freedom. After that it was forbidden any to give Luther "house or home, food, drink, or shelter." He was to be an outlaw, hunted as a heretic, and on capture, delivered to be burned!

But Luther had disappeared. As he journeyed slowly from Worms a band of horsemen surrounded and captured him, and carried him off—not to prison —but to the strong Castle of the Wartburg surrounded by the beautiful forest. There he was received, not as a banned outlaw, but as an honored guest. Safe from attack—for the forest folk well knew how to keep watch—protected by his own Prince, Luther had time to rest and grow strong after the strain of years. His "rest" was not idleness. Amid the quiet sounds and lovely scenes of the forest, he set about a task he had dreamed of for years. He would give his beloved Germany the New Testament in its own tongue. The truths he had discovered and loved and lived on as he read them in the Latin Testament should be known and read in humble homes. Before the year ended the task was done.—Condensed from a Story by Emily Huntley.

Sentence Sermons. Moral courage is a temper of high resolution dominated by a moral aim.—W. J. Dawson.

"Christianity is the spirit and quality of life breathed into people from fellowship with Jesus."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What do Acts 1.15; 2.41, 47; 4.4; 5.14 tell you about the growth of the Church? 2. When and for what purpose did Jesus appoint the Seventy? (Lk. 10.1-9.) 3. What is meant by "the daily ministrations"? 4. What is the office of a deacon in certain churches today? 5. Where is Macedonia? 6. Where was Achaia? 7. What did Jesus bid the rich young ruler do, and why did Jesus ask him to do it? 8. What did Jesus say about giving in Lk. 6.38? 9. Do you care to receive a gift that is given grudgingly? 10. Would a grudgingly given gift be acceptable to God?

LESSON III—JULY 19

SOCIAL SERVICE IN THE EARLY CHURCH

GOLDEN TEXT: He himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. Acts 20.35

LESSON Acts 4.32-35; 6.1-7; 9.36-39; 2 Corinthians 9.1-15
DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 112.5-10

ACTS 4.32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one "of them" said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 34 For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need.

6.1 Now in these days when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. 2 And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables. 3 Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 4 But we will continue stedfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word.

2 Corinthians 9.1 For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: 2 for I know your readiness, of which I glory on your behalf to them of Macedonia, that Achaia hath been prepared for a year past; and your zeal hath stirred up very many of them. 3 But I have sent the brethren, that our glorying on your behalf may not be made void in this respect; that, even as I said, ye may be prepared: 4 lest by any means, if there come with me any of Macedonia and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be put to shame in this confidence. 5 I thought it necessary therefore to entreat the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your aforepromised bounty, that the same might be ready as a matter of bounty, and not of extortion.

6 But this "I say," He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. 7 "Let" each man "do" according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. Sharing Possessions, Acts 4.32-35. There was the greatest unity of feeling and purpose in the early Christian Church; as the proverbial expression has it, they were of one heart and soul.

Settled on the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea, and living in scattered communities throughout Palestine at this time, were the Essenes, a sect that literally had all things common. Each one deposited whatever he possessed in a general treasury, of which several managers took charge, supplying from it the needs of all. In Egypt there was a Jewish sect called the Therapeutai whose members gave away all their possessions when they joined the order, and there was among them no distinction of rich or poor. It is said of the disciples at Jerusalem at this time that "not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." With them, however, the giving up of possessions was voluntary (5.4)—each one regarded his property as held in trust for others.

With great power the apostles testified to the resurrection of the Lord, and great grace—God's free favor—was upon them all. The proof of the Divine grace was shown in the wonderful generosity of the Christian community: as need for assistance arose among the poor, those who had lands or houses sold them and brought the amount received to the apostles for them to distribute. "Laid them at the apostles' feet" is a figurative expression which doubtless arose from the Oriental custom of laying gifts at the feet of kings; it meant that the money was left in the apostles' control.

It is interesting to recall here what Aristides wrote to the Emperor Hadrian

about the Christians of those days: "They rescue the orphan from him who does him violence, and he who has gives to him who has not, without grudging. And if there is a man among them who is poor or needy and they have not abundance of necessaries, they fast two or three days that they may supply the needy with their necessary food."

Like the sharing of those early Christians is often the marvelous sharing of the poor today with those still poorer than themselves. They divide their meals with the poorer ones, sharing with them their last bit of bread or bag of potatoes. If the well-to-do would emulate them, what a happy world this would be!

II. Sharing Responsibilities, Acts 6.1-7. The last verse of Chapter V tells us that the disciples ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ: now we learn that the result was the multiplying of the number of Christ's followers. For notes of the growth of the church see Acts 1.15; 2.41; 47; 4.4; 5.14. And now we are told of troubles which arose between the Grecian Jews and the Hebrews. The Grecian Jews (the Jews who spoke Greek, the Hellenists) complained that their widows were neglected in the daily distribution of food to the poor. The Greek word "diakonia," translated "ministration," means service. The distribution had been well carried out as long as the numbers were not too great, for the apostles had the oversight of it all (Acts 4.35), but now the work was too great for them in connection with their other duties. Those who have administered funds for charity know how difficult it is to avoid "murmuring" from some one.

The apostles called a public meeting of the church and put the matter before it. It was not right, they told the assembly, for them to neglect their work of preaching to look after the distribution of food to the needy—to "serve tables"—and therefore they counseled that seven men be chosen, men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, who should be appointed for that work. As Chrysostom observes, "It needed great philosophy to hear the complaints of the widows." From the Greek word "diakonein," translated "serve" (serve tables, verse 2), comes our word "deacon": and it is generally thought that from this choice of the Seven for a special service the office later sprang. In Phil. 1.1, Paul refers to deacons, and in 1 Tim. 3.8-13 he notes the qualifications necessary for this office.

The management of the so-called secular interests of the church, as well as that of the religious interests, requires wise, spirit-filled men and women. "Too often we choose men to handle the money matters of the church, not on the basis of their vision and spirituality, but sheerly because of their business ability. The latter qualification is needed but it is by no means the first consideration. In some churches, the officers charged with this tremendous responsibility are not even required to be members. Trustees are often dominant men, men who have succeeded in the business world apart from all spiritual considerations. These outstanding personalities of the Board of Trustees exert an undue influence on the scope and character of the whole program of the church. Being hard-headed business men, they know the ways of secular business and often but little of the aims, the spirit, the psychology of spiritual procedure. So often a church becomes merely an institution run to pay its bills. It is a money-raising organization. Its spiritual purpose and objectives are made quite secondary, or, at least, are considerably overshadowed."

As for the apostles, their time would then be free to continue steadfastly in prayer and carry on their work of preaching and teaching.

"The secret life of prayer alone prepares and qualifies for the public life of ministry" (J. Stuart Holden).

"Rivers of vitality have their rise in souls that are on their knees before God" (J. H. Jowett).

All were pleased with the apostles' counsel, and they at once chose seven men whom the apostles consecrated for their office by the laying on of hands. This is the first mention in the New Testament of what has grown into an

ecclesiastical rite. Among the Seven was Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip. Of these two we hear more further on in The Acts, but the other five are not again mentioned.

III. Paul's Exhortations to Generous Giving, 2 Cor. 9.1-7. Moffatt's smooth rendering of these words written by Paul to the Church at Corinth makes the sense very clear:

Indeed, it is quite superfluous for me to be writing to you about this charitable service to the saints; I know how willing you are, I am proud of it, I have boasted of you to the Macedonians: "Achaia," I tell them, "was all ready last year." And your zeal has been a stimulus to the majority of them. At the same time I am sending these brothers just in case my pride in you should prove an empty boast in this particular instance; I want you to be "all ready," as I have been telling them that you would be, in case any Macedonians accompany me and find you are not ready—which would make me (not to speak of yourselves) ashamed of having been so sure. That is why I have thought it necessary to ask these brothers to go on in advance and get your promised contribution ready in good time. I want it to be forthcoming as a generous gift, not as money wrung out of you. Mark this: he who sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and he who sows generously will reap a generous harvest. Every one is to give what he has made up his mind to give; there is to be no grudging or compulsion about it, for God loves the giver who gives cheerfully.

> "It is evident that Paul did not leave giving to chance, not even where there was a wonderful spirit of giving as there had been for a year in the Corinthian church. It was necessary to have a plan to secure the gifts of each member. The right spirit and purpose must be capitalized by definite methods. This suggests the spiritual need of conducting an efficient Every Member Canvass. The church must not leave so vital a matter as giving to chance, but must afford every member an opportunity to share in the local and world-wide work of the church."

As true as it is that the bountiful harvest depends upon the bountiful sowing, so true is it, Paul declares, that generous gifts are seeds that will yield a plentiful return. Dr. J. R. Miller explains the harvest: "The blessings they carry to those who receive them is one harvest. Then the blessing that the mere act of giving brings back to the giver is another; for Jesus said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Then there is the harvest in the other world. An old epitaph reads, 'What I gave I have; what I kept I lost.'" Recall Lk. 6.38 and Prov. 11.24, 25.

> "Some men give so that you are angry every time you ask them to contribute. Other persons give with such beauty that you remember it as long as you live, and you say, 'It is a pleasure to go to such men.' There are some men who give as springs do; whether you go to them or not they are full, and your part is only to put your dish under the ever-flowing stream. Others give just as a pump does when the well is dry and the pump leaks" (Henry Ward Beecher).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The Grecian Jews, Acts 6.1. Jews from everywhere came on annual pilgrimages to the Holy City, and many stayed on there permanently. Just as in Jerusalem today there are separate synagogues for "Sephardim Jews" and for "Ashkenazin Jews," so in The Acts we find evidences of separate synagogues for Grecian Jews from Cilicia or other parts of Asia Minor, and from Africa. Some of these Grecian Jews had become "obedient to the faith" of the apostles.

Their widows were neglected, Acts 6.1. Among the poor in Oriental countries the case of widows, left without any legal protector, was particularly hard. The Jews had a fund for the relief of widows and orphans, and the church could not but provide for her own. In return for their support the widows, like Anna the prophetess (Lk. 2.36-38), devoted themselves to prayer and good works. Such widows formed a recognized body; their names were

entered on a roll; and Paul in writing to Timothy devotes a whole chapter to their organization. Already at Jerusalem there is a body of widows in the church, and a little later we shall find them at Joppa (9.41).—R. B. Rackham, in The Westminster Commentary.

These widows, as Oriental widows in general are, were not always pleasant subjects to deal with; wanting a great deal in knowledge on account of their seclusion and their ignorance, which are common to widows in eastern life—wanting a great deal of the shrewdness and wisdom and humor and high character that make visiting aged and sick folks among ourselves so often a pleasure and an inspiration.—George Adam Smith.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

In our last lesson we heard the apostles speak words that might be termed "contempt of court." They renounced their allegiance to the Sanhedrin, the great Jewish tribunal. They became the head of an independent church, responsible only to their heavenly Leader. At first they made no effort to form any ecclesiastical organization. They met in private houses, they sang Psalms, they repeated the Lord's Prayer, and partook frequently, probably weekly, of the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper was often followed by a church supper, partly for its social fellowship, and partly to provide food for those in need. The one condition of their fellowship was loyalty to the Master. How those who had means shared with the poor is the thought of our first text from The Acts.

Pentecost we call the birthday of the church: in our verses from Acts we see a brotherhood in action, and we may call this period the birthday of social Christianity.

Some years later when Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem and met the apostles for a conference in regard to the basis on which Gentile converts should be received into the church, the apostles impressed on Paul the duty of the Gentile churches of caring for the poor, "which very thing I was also zealous to do," Paul wrote the Galatians (2.10).

The maintenance of its own poor had been the care of each particular church, but Paul would have the churches realize the principle of universal brotherhood, and he made a careful plan for a great collection from many distant churches for the relief of the poor at Jerusalem. To the Corinthians he wrote in his First Epistle (16.1-5): "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collection be made when I come. And when I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send with letters to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem: and if it be meet for me to go also, they shall go with me. But I will come unto you, when I shall have passed through Macedonia."

To the Corinthians Paul gave as a motive for liberal giving the example of Christ and their abundance compared with the want at Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8.14); to the Romans (15.26, 27) he wrote that the churches of Macedonia and Achaia in making their gifts to the church at Jerusalem but paid a debt of gratitude due that church. His greatest motive in having the collection made, however, seems to have been to prove the fellowship of all believers, to unite Gentiles and Jews, between whom there was danger of jealousy and dissensions, through the giving of common sympathy and sharing of mutual help.

It was from some city in Macedonia that Paul wrote his Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

It was not meet that the apostles should take time from prayer and from the ministry of the word to serve tables. It is not meet that a church school teacher should take time from prayer and from the ministry of the Word to keep the record of attendance, to pass the Bibles, to take up the collection, to open the windows, to look after the necessary machinery of the class work. Every class should be organized: the secretary should keep the records, the treasurer should take the collection, etc. A teacher should not minimize the dignity and responsibility of his office. The bigness of his message and the

greatness of his opportunity should so captivate his mind that he cannot devote it to routine matters; and having the responsibility of the latter will be excellent for his pupils.

A teacher cannot rightfully go to a class unprepared because he has been helping with a church concert or a church supper. First things must come first, and your church school class should be first in your church activities. If there is not time also for secondary church matters, they should not be undertaken.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE GENEROSITY OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS

Beginning the Lesson. As we all know, the term Socialism has many shades of meaning. What kind of Socialism prevailed in the early church at Jerusalem?

A group of people on board a steamer were discussing political questions. It was noticed that one man took no part in the discussion, and when he was asked, "What are you?" he replied, "I am a Socialist." "Then we are brothers, for I am one, too," exclaimed his questioner. "But I must explain further," the first man returned. "I recognize two sorts of Socialists, and I should like to know which sort you are. There were Socialists even in the time of the apostles, for we read that 'they brought their possessions'; but now there is also another kind of Socialist of whom it may be said, 'They would take their possessions away from the rich.' I am a Socialist of the first sort; what are you?"

A good definition of a Socialist, or Communist, of the second sort is given by the "Corn-law Rhymer":—

> "What is a Communist? One who has yearnings
> For equal division of unequal earnings;
> Idler or bungler, or both, he is willing
> To fork out his penny and pocket your shilling."

Dr. Robert F. Horton defines Christian Socialism in this way: "It is a social organization in which all men's good is each man's rule, in which each one thinks not of his own interests, but of the whole, in which coöperation and mutual aid have taken the place of competition, and in which equal rights and opportunities are offered to every one. A Socialist in that sense will labor for the weak and for the unfortunate; he will seek to alter institutions in the direction of mercy and of justice; he will put public interests before private interests; he will attach more importance to life than to property; and, indeed, he will limit the rights of property by the interests of the community. He will admit no rights without corresponding duties; he will define wealth, not in terms of material possessions, but in terms of real well-being. The wealth of the country will to him be the stock of healthy, happy and virtuous lives that are lived in the country."

The Socialism of the early Christians was a Christian Socialism. The sharing of possessions was voluntary; there was nothing compulsory about it. The fault of Ananias and Sapphira lay not in their keeping back a part of the price of their land which they sold for the benefit of others, but in their hypocrisy, in their claiming that they were giving away the whole sum. The Socialism of the early Christians was purely benevolent, no selfishness was connected therewith. They simply regarded their incomes as held in trust, not for themselves alone but for those in need. A better name than Socialism for their way of living is Social Service. It is examples of Social Service in the Early Church which we study today.

Accounting for the Generosity of the Early Christians. These men and women had passed through an experience that had set them beside themselves. Their lives were full of rapture and ecstasy. You know that when a great joy has come to you, it brings with it a tide of good will towards men. If at that moment you were asked to give a subscription to a good cause, it would be a generous subscription that you would give and you would go far out of your way to help a lame dog over a stile. And those early Christians, so far from thinking that they had discovered a new economic philosophy,

were simply flooded with a spirit of generosity and they did the natural thing in the circumstance. They made common cause; those who had shared with those who hadn't and they saw no virtue in doing so. It was all in the day's work. Great grace was upon them all; and they did these generous, magnanimous, brotherly things because they could not help themselves.—Richard Roberts, in The New Outlook.

God Loveth a Cheerful Giver. As far as we remember, it never says anywhere in the Bible that God loves the giver who gives a great deal, or who gives regularly, or who gives after any other scheme or fashion, but just the giver who gives cheerfully.

Why cheerfulness should thus be named as the one supreme virtue in relation to giving might, at first flush, be difficult to understand, but a little thought makes it all clear. Giving is one of the finest and most beautiful things that we do, the thing that redeems human life and makes it so infinitely above all other forms of living, that links us on to God and makes us his children in a way that nothing else can possibly do.

But like many of the beautiful things that men may do, giving is not easy to do ideally. And we realize at once that nothing could spoil this wonderful and divine enterprise so completely as that it should be done in a wrong and unworthy spirit. A mother gives of her time and her patience and her skill to her sick child, but what a travesty it would be if she did it all grudgingly and of necessity and without any of that wonderful and yearning love that can only be born in a mother's heart! And what is it that makes the lover's gift of such infinite value and magnifies some insignificant trifle into the most beautiful thing in all the world but that realization of the warmth and ardor of the affection that accompanies it!

Now Paul was a very wise man, and he knew that the Christian's giving of his gifts to the cause of his Master and for the good of men might be a rich and ennobling experience, a kind of sacrament that would bless his whole life, or it might be a very commonplace or even stupid performance, and that the difference would lie altogether in the spirit in which the thing was done. And he knew, too, how easy it was for most men to fail utterly of that higher and richer experience and to do the fine thing poorly and meanly and thus miss all the blessing. And therefore he wrote, with fine insight, that fruitful sentence, "For God loves the giver who gives cheerfully," telling us that if a man will give the warmth and enthusiasm of his soul with his gift the whole will become a blessed sacrament.—Editorial in The New Outlook.

A Generous Giver's Experience of the Joy of Giving. At the age of fifty-four Morris K. Jesup, the great philanthropist, realized that he must give up either his business or his charitable work. Despite the opposition of his friends, he decided to retire from business and devote all his time to his charities. And then for twenty-four years he was busier than ever during his business career. Not long before his death he wrote about his giving as follows:

"I have always tried to give with understanding and a fair mind, not as a mechanical matter, but with sympathy, honesty of purpose, and, with my gift, as far as possible, myself. Giving wisely and with the heart is a God-blessed gift, bringing with it always a return of joy and peace. I want to say here for the benefit of others—not that they should adopt the principle in a selfish way—that giving does not impoverish but rather adds to one's store. Each year I have found that my property has increased in value and in quantity, notwithstanding the fact that ofttimes my giving has been much larger than my increase, after deducting family and personal expenses. If men of prosperity could only realize the return not only of joy and peace, but of love and blessing that the giving of one's means bestows, I feel sure that the world would find itself bettered and ennobled by the lives of many who now seem to live only to add to life's troubles and sorrows. Giving should be a habit with all Christian men and women, as much as praying or eating. With the habit thus formed life can be made happy, dignified, and joyous."

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. Nobody ought to have everything till everybody has something.—Winston Churchill.

2. Is our minister carrying more burdens than he should carry? What part of them can be shifted to our shoulders?

3. Is there danger of a church becoming so interested in the "serving of tables," that is, in work along institutional lines, as to neglect the greater service along inspirational lines?

4. The so-called Communism of the early church and of today: have they anything in common?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How did the fact that Stephen was a Greek-speaking Jew bring about his death? 2. What was the effect upon Paul of Stephen's death? 3. Why were not the apostles forced to leave Jerusalem? 4. In his words of Acts 22, was Paul excusing his early persecutions of Christ's followers? 5. What are the effects of persecution? 6. Why do persecutions fail of their purpose? 7. What are some of the great persecutions of Christians? 8. Where was Antioch, and for what was it famous? 9. What was there remarkable about speaking the word to the Greeks in Antioch?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

CHRISTIANS SHARING WITH OTHERS

Beginning the Lesson. When the eighty delegates to the Peace Conference in Constance, Germany, in the summer of 1914, were told that they must leave on Monday because after that the railroads would be handed over for the mobilization of troops, they found the situation a serious one. The banks were closed, and many of them had not sufficient money on hand to take them home. Then the secretary suggested that all should put their gold in a common pot, and divide it up among them all. The suggestion was instantly adopted. A hat was placed on the table, and each one emptied into it all the gold he had. Then in the language of our lesson text, distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need. The treasurer purchased eighty tickets to London, and gave two dollars to each delegate for food on the way. Thus by having all things in common they were all enabled to reach home quickly.

Of course a record was kept of the amount deposited by each delegate, and on arriving in London those who had received more than they gave made good the difference. They said the experiences reminded them all very forcibly of the time in the early church when the disciples had possessions in common, and distribution was made unto each according as any one had need. What does Luke say about that time?

Relief Work in Modern Corinth. The children who are arranged in our cut to represent Second Corinthians 1.8-11 are a part of the more than one thousand orphans who have been cared for in modern Corinth by the Near East Relief. They are not only without fathers and mothers but without a country, having been brought here from Asia Minor to save their lives. The words from Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians are most appropriate to their situation: "For we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning our affliction which befell us in Asia, that we were weighed down exceedingly, beyond our power, inasmuch as some despaired even of life: yea, we

ourselves have had the sentence of death within ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead: who delivered us out of so great a death, and will deliver us: on whom we have set our hope that he will also still deliver us; ye also helping together on our behalf by your supplication; that, for the gift bestowed upon us by means of many, thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf."

How these words and the need of these children recall the time when Paul was exhorting the Corinthians of his day to be generous in their giving for the support of the poor in Jerusalem! Whose example did he cite to them? How did he counsel them not to give? How, to give?

The Fine Art of Giving. Outlet as well as intake is imperative if we are not to become green, scummy, stagnant pools. Fine impulses within the heart are worse than useless unless they find prompt and wholesome expression in finer forms of effort. Retained, they wither and die, poisoning the springs of action. The most direct mode of expression is to be found in giving—in giving time, money, strength and interest to needy lives and to worthy causes.

The right mood for giving is one of great, glad privilege. When ye sacrifice, in order to give, be not of a sad countenance. Anoint your head, and wash your face, and smile. Let it all be done with the air of gladness, for the Lord blesseth the cheerful giver! When the population of a beehive becomes congested the bees swarm. A great company of them, under the leadership of a new queen, moves out. They leave their home and the stock of honey they helped to make, going forth empty handed to find a new home and make a fresh start. And they enter upon that self-sacrifice with a song—bees are never so friendly as at the time when they swarm.

He would make all giving intelligent and methodical. He would have our "love abound in knowledge and in all judgment." Men are to be prepared to make generous response by a sympathetic knowledge of the facts. He would have each gift the expression not of the purse alone nor of the heart alone—he would have heart and mind, purse and will enlist together in generous action.

Let there be some definite percentage in our giving which mind and conscience can approve! Let people everywhere give as they live. If they are compelled to live sparingly, let there be no reproach when they give sparingly. If they live bountifully let them give also bountifully.—Condensed from a Sermon by Charles R. Brown.

Why Giving Is more Blessed. He himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. These words of our Golden Text are Paul's words to the Ephesian elders which follow his statement, "Ye ought to help the weak." To give is not only a duty but a blessing. Giving is more blessed in the sense that it is more divine, more Godlike, and also in the sense that it carries with it a greater blessing. Longfellow's words tell us how:

> Our Lord and Master,
> When he departed, left us in his will
> As our best legacy on earth, the poor!
> These we have always with us; had we not,
> Our hearts would grow as hard as are these stones.

The giving tells upon the character. Generous giving not only keeps one from hardness of heart, but from selfishness, self-centeredness, with all the other evil traits to which that leads. To receive the good things of this world, to receive help from others in time of need, is a great blessing; to use the good things of this world for others—whether money or talent or influence or sympathy—brings with it the keenest joy and is the more blessed. It ennobles character, and lays up for one treasures in heaven.

Generous Givers. The floor of the meeting place where the church worshiped was of earth and got very damp and sodden in winter, so that the members were unable to kneel in prayer. One Sunday Mr. Wang and his wife appeared after the service had begun—a most unusual thing. They looked very hot and tired, and we wondered for a moment what were the bulky burdens which they carried on their backs. They came forward to the center of the little group of ten or twelve worshipers, and then each of them laid at

my feet five nicely plaited straw hassocks, saying, "This is my present to the church."

Knowing their deep poverty I thanked them warmly, and added, "You shall be paid for these."

"Oh, no! Oh, don't," they replied; "we can do so little for the Lord's work, do let us do the little that we can."

"Where did you get them?" was the question upon everybody's lips, for straw was very scarce at that time, and I had failed to get any one to make them for me. The reply gave further proof of their living zeal. Mr. Wang said, "Well, in the daytime, when we were at work in the fields, we looked for a little scattered straw, and then, after our day's work was done, we went and gathered it up."

"But," said I, "working so hard as you do, how could you possibly find time to do this extra work?"

"Oh," he answered, "we just stayed up a few nights and plaited them."

My heart was very full that day as I saw these evidences of real devotion to God on the part of these poor peasants, who but a little while before had been in the darkest of heathenism. I could only think of them in their poverty as being "rich toward God," and rich indeed they are in another way also—they are being used in bringing the gospel to their neighbors and friends.—From a Letter of a Missionary.

A Practical Way in Which to Share with Others. An American physician from a hospital at Shanghai was once waiting at the station for the train from Hangchow. As she was pacing the platform she noticed that two Chinese lads were gazing curiously at her. She wished she could talk to them, but she could not speak Chinese very well. Like an inspiration came the thought of some picture-cards which were in her hand-bag, left over from Sunday School the day before. "I told the stories in as good Chinese as I could command," she writes, "and I was surprised that they seemed to understand so much. I invited them to come to Sunday School to learn more about Jesus, and then I continued my walk. When I turned to come back, there was a man leaning over the boys and as I passed they were explaining the pictures. Soon another joined the group, and then another. A wonderful opportunity came as I told them why I had left my own native land. For most of my listeners this was the first time the old, old story had been told. To them it was new and wonderful."

You would be surprised could you know how useful such picture-cards are in mission work everywhere. And not only picture-cards but picture-rolls, maps of Bible lands, special day programs, illustrated Sunday-school papers and scrap books made up of pictures (especially in colors) from magazines, are most useful in missionary teaching. Then there are all sorts of gifts which you can spare that would make happy your brothers and sisters in foreign lands.

The World's Sunday School Association is a great organization that has come into existence first to promote the missionary idea in Sunday-school work, and second, to promote the Sunday-school idea in missionary work. One of its departments is known as The Department for Utilizing Surplus Material. If you are interested in sending pictures, etc., to the foreign field, write to Dr. Samuel D. Price, 216 Metropolitan Tower, New York City, for the address of a missionary and further details as to the needs. State your denomination, tell him what you have to send, and enclose a stamp for reply.

Sentence Sermons.

We shall do so much in the years to come,
But what have we done today?
We shall give our gold in a princely sum,
But what did we give today?—Nixon Waterman.

Caring means sharing.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How is Stephen described in Acts 6.3, 5, 8, 10? 2. When on the cross, what prayer did Jesus offer for those who killed him? 3. What did Jesus say about those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake? 4. What does Hebrews 11.36-40 say about early martyrs' deaths? 5. What does Paul say in Acts 26.9 about his sincerity in persecuting the followers of Christ? 6. What was the command of Christ which we call the Great Commission? 7. What led to its being carried out? 8. Where was Antioch? Phœnicia? Cyprus? Cyrene?

LESSON IV—JULY 26

CHRISTIANITY SPREAD BY PERSECUTION

GOLDEN TEXT: Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life. Revelation 2.10

LESSON Acts 7.54 to 8.4; 11.19-21; 26.9-11; 1 Peter 4.12-19

DEVOTIONAL READING 1 Peter 1.3-9

ACTS 7.59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon "the Lord," and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.

Acts 8.1 And when he had said this, he fell asleep. 1 And Saul was consenting unto his death.

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 And devout men buried Stephen, and made great lamentation over him. 3 But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison.

4 They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word.

Acts 11.19 They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phœnicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews. 20 But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Arrest of Stephen, One of the Seven Deacons Appointed to Help in the Work of the Church, Acts 6.8-15.

II. Stephen's Defense, 7.1-50.

III. Stephen Accuses his Persecutors, 7.51-53.

IV. The First Christian Martyr, 7.54-60; 8.2. How challenging is the fortitude and grace of Stephen! In the strength of his vision of the heavens opened and of the Son of man standing on the right hand of God, he could meet hatred and even death with a serene and courageous spirit. How his quiet demeanor contrasts with the clamorous ruthlessness and hatred of the mob, who grind their teeth in fury, scream, rush upon him, drag him without the city walls, and stone him!

When the stoning began, Stephen knelt down to pray for power faithfully to endure to the end, or it may be that as the stones hurtled upon him he was thrown to his knees and was in this position as he prayed. As the stones came thick and fast, like his Master he prayed for those who stoned him. "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," he cried: do not weigh, place not this sin in thy balance against them. At once, we think of Christ's prayer from the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

> "In our lives we need Stephen's steadfast courage, and his clear-eyed faith, and his heaven-piercing hope, and his God-like charity."

And when he had said this, he died, or, as it is beautifully expressed here, "he fell asleep." And devout men buried him, and made great lamentation over him, beating their breasts as a sign of their grief. It took courage to perform this kindly act for Stephen, even if most of the mad mob had departed to wreak their vengeance on the Church in Jerusalem.

> "But Stephen was not dead; he had just begun to live. He had entered on an immortal career of usefulness and left his influence behind him. There is no limit in time or space to the influence of a consecrated life. Be thou faithful unto death, therefore, if thou wouldest have the crown!" (David James Burrell).

V. Paul's Part in Stephen's Death, Acts 8.1. When witnesses to the stoning of Stephen laid aside their flowing robes in order to have freer liberty of action, they left them in the care of a young man named Saul. He is first called Paul

in Acts 13.9. And Saul was consenting unto his death, approving all that was done. In Acts 22.20 Paul himself says, "And when the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed, I also was standing by and consenting."

It may be that Paul took no active part that day in the persecution which desolated the homes of many Christians in Jerusalem. As at the death of Stephen, he may have been an onlooker only. The neutral onlooker who does not actively oppose the event often in the end becomes a participant in the evil. One who gives inward consent to a wrong by standing by without antagonizing that wrong in a measure approves it, and may soon be espousing it.

VI. Persecution Begins, and the Disciples Are Driven beyond Jerusalem, Acts. 8.1, 2. Not content with Stephen's death, the mob began a city-wide persecution of the church which was in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria. Nearly six years had elapsed since Jesus commissioned his disciples to go and teach all nations, yet the church was still in Jerusalem, and not a single Gentile had been invited into the church. All these years the Christian group had lived in friendly relationship with their non-Christian Jewish neighbors. "They had favor with all the people," Acts 2.47. The rulers found "nothing how they might punish them, because of the people," 4.21. "The people magnified them," 5.13. The apostles and disciples still shared as Jews in the great national hopes, thinking that somehow Jesus was to realize them for Israel. Again and again Peter in his speeches had given expression to this attitude: "To you is the promise and to your children," 2.39; "Unto you first God, having raised up his Servant, sent him to bless you," 3.26. When Stephen made his speech that day, no one foresaw what would come to pass. There was no intention on the part of the church itself to change the "status quo." Neither the apostles nor the disciples were ready to give the gospel to all nations; they were quite content to keep on growing in Jerusalem.

They were all scattered abroad except the apostles, Luke tells us. Why were they excepted? To understand the whole situation it must be remembered that there were two distinct groups in the Jerusalem Church—the Grecians, Greek Jews, and the Hebrews, natives of Palestine. The Hebrews had maintained close touch with the ancient ideals and traditions of the fathers, and the apostles belonged to this group. They had not offended. Peter knew how to deal with the spirit, the outlook and the temper of Jerusalem. Stephen was a Grecian, and while still a Jew and loyal to Moses and the temple, he had had contact with the Greek world and saw in Israel's rejection of Jesus as Messiah that God might turn to the Gentiles.

As for the apostles themselves, we may think that they chose to remain in Jerusalem because they wished to help the other Christians to keep the church going in spite of persecution.

VII. Paul's Share in the Persecution, Acts 8.3. "Consenting" today, standing by while others stoned Stephen, presently, when the attempt to destroy the church became a settled policy to be systematically carried out, Paul enlisted in the task and with fury and zeal entered into every home and dragging from it men and women committed them to prison.

VIII. The Scattered Christians Preach Everywhere, Acts 8.4. The attempt to extinguish a great fire by kicking the embers apart resulted in a new fire blazing up where each ember fell. Hitherto the apostles had done the preaching. At the time of the appointment of the seven deacons, the apostles had declared "we will give ourselves continually to the ministry of the word." But all believers scattered by persecution went everywhere preaching the word. They probably did not declare the truth at first in any set form. Simpson says, they went "gossiping the gospel." As they sought shelter in the villages and towns, in explaining why they were there, they would tell the story of the gospel. This brought to the surface latent talent and those gifted began more formal preaching. In this way, the preaching of the truth ceased to be exclusively an apostolic function.

"The storms of persecution are only winds which fan the fire of faith and carry the sparks of truth to a distance."

IX. The Fruits of the Persecution, Acts 11.19-21. Many of those driven out of Jerusalem went beyond Judea and Samaria into Phœnicia (the province in which Tyre and Sidon were located), to the island of Cyprus and to the city of Antioch, the capital city of Syria, from whence Paul later was to make his start on all three of his great missionary journeys.

The "Great Commission" (1.8) calls for successively larger circles of gospel presentation; first, In Jerusalem, second, In Judea, third, In Samaria, fourth, Unto the uttermost part of the earth. Those who came to Phœnicia, Cyprus and Antioch began the church's witness for Christ in the fourth and last great area, "the uttermost part of the earth."

At first, the word was preached to the Jews alone. Even yet, in spite of the experience in Jerusalem, the universality of the gospel was not understood. But some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, i.e., Grecian Jews (Hellenists), who had lived in Greek areas and who because of their more cosmopolitan experience entertained fewer scruples about mixing with Gentiles than did those Jews of Palestine, who, driven out of Jerusalem, were for the first time in contact with the Gentile world. When the former came to Antioch they spoke also to the Greeks. "Grecians" refers to "Hellenists," that is, Jews born outside of Palestine, to speak to whom would have been nothing new. The gospel on Pentecost day was spoken to Grecians, Hellenists. But to speak to "Greeks" was to break over Jewish barriers of separation. The preachers in Antioch may have heard of Peter's experience with Cornelius (10.1-11.18). Many Gentiles had lost faith in their pagan beliefs and had turned to the religion of Israel and to the worship of the one true God in the synagogues. Their interest often won for them the esteem of their Jewish neighbors (Luke 7.1-5). It would not seem as difficult to preach Christ to these Greeks as to those who had no understanding of Judaism.

Here, as often, God moved "in a mysterious way his wonders to perform." The petty murmurings of the Grecians against the Hebrews over the distribution of the poor fund to their widows led to the appointment of the seven deacons. Stephen was selected as one of them. He was stoned and the wild fury of a mob of excited Jews inflamed with fanatical fears for Judaism started the first persecution of the Church, and then to this radical break with the past. "Who would have expected that God would use the grumbling of a few Grecian Christians about their bread and butter to give birth to the Church's ambition to give Christ to all nations?"

> Truly great issues are often hidden in what apparently are merely casual incidents of life. The most commonplace incident may be the hinge of momentous outcome. The meeting of a new acquaintance may be the straw that turns the whole stream of life. A random word spoken unwittingly may rock the throne of kings.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

They stoned Stephen, 8.59. Stoning was the mode of capital punishment prescribed by the Hebrew law. The procedure to be followed is given in the Talmud as follows:

"After a man has been condemned to be stoned, they bring him good strong wine, and give him to drink, that he may not feel too great horror of a violent death. Then come the witnesses, and bind his hands and feet, and lead him to the place of stoning. Then the witnesses take a great stone, large enough to cause death, and lay it upon his heart all together, lest one should act before another, according to Dt. 17.7: then all the Israelites can overwhelm him with stones."

Devout men buried Stephen, and made great lamentation over him, Acts 8.2. The Jews entombed or buried all the dead, exercising this care even for the remains of the slain enemy or malefactor.

In imitation of the family custom of annually commemorating at the grave the death of deceased members, the churches celebrated the deaths of their martyrs by prayers at their graves, and by love-feasts. From this high estimation of the martyrs, Christians were sometimes led to deliver themselves up voluntarily to the public authorities—thus justifying the charge of fanaticism brought against them by the heathen. For the most part, however, this practice was discountenanced.—Kitto.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

By the confession of the high priest himself, (5.28) Jerusalem was now filled with the "doctrine." The church had grown in numbers. While the Jewish officials were not friendly, the people were, and a "great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." There was no active opposition. The church was largely a Jewish institution with a purely Jewish outlook. There were two kinds of Jews among its membership but no Gentiles as yet,—the Palestinian Jews and the Greek-speaking Jews. It was by the Hellenists—the Greek-speaking Jews—that God stirred up the church's nest, that it might try its wings in a new area of service. Not by the apostles, but by a Spirit-filled "dispenser of the relief funds" did God work out his purpose.

In Acts 9 and 10 we learn that the persecution which followed the death of Stephen led to the preaching of the gospel beyond Jerusalem, in other parts of Palestine. In our excerpt from the eleventh chapter we learn how this gospel was carried beyond Palestine as far as Antioch in Syria. It was a tremendous innovation, the preaching to Gentiles in Antioch, and because of its influence upon later events Antioch has been called the second birthplace of Christianity.

Antioch was on the Orontes, sixteen miles from the coast. It was the capital of Syria and one of the most famous cities of the ancient world.

Phœnicia at this time was that part of the Roman Province of Syria which extended for a hundred and twenty miles along the Mediterranean coast north of Palestine.

Cyprus is the large island in the Mediterranean south of Asia Minor. Cyrene was the capital of Libya, west of Egypt.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Saul the Persecutor showed the same steadfast, persistent, unrelenting qualities which were so admirable in Paul the Apostle. Some one has suggested that when he was a boy he must have given a great deal of trouble. Certainly he must have been an unyielding youth—his teachers may have called him obstinate. But think what he became! It may be that you have such a youth in your class, of whom you have almost despaired. It is worth any amount of trouble on your part to enlist his "obstinacy" in the cause of righteousness.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE EFFECTS OF PERSECUTION

Beginning the Lesson. The constant testimony of history is that persecution, instead of destroying, always issues in the encouragement and growth of the cause or group being persecuted. The Sanhedrin and Paul did not anticipate that their fierce program of persecution would in the end lead to the multiplication of those who would believe in this "way." They planned to put a full stop to this new sect by utterly annihilating them: they entered "into every house"; they haled both "men and women"; Saul started for Damascus to find and destroy "any of this way, whether they were men or women." They aimed to exterminate this new faith. But persecution only accelerated its growth. Up to the time of this outbreak of persecution, the whole propaganda of the despised group was located at one center, Jerusalem. But the mob that day, frenzied and encouraged by the taste of blood at the stoning of Stephen, began "a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem" and the scattering of the believers abroad succeeded only in multiplying the centers of propagation. It was as if a lighted lamp had been violently shattered to extinguish its flame. At every point these scattered disciples' faith and hope and testimony flamed up as a new center of light and truth.

"The philosophy of persecutions is best expressed in the terse word of Tertullian who lived in the midst of them but did not see the end: 'The blood of the Christians is the seed of the Church.'" The blood of persecution has been also the seed of civil and religious liberty and of all progress in truth and enlightenment. Always persecutions have failed. "The long and bloody war of heathen Rome against the Church which is built upon a rock utterly failed. It began in Rome under Nero, it ended near Rome at the Milvain Bridge, when Constantine, stirred by his vision of the banner of the cross with the legend in Latin "In Hoc Signo Vinces"—By This Sign Conquer—made Christianity the

legal religion of the Roman Empire. The story of the Waldensians, of the Huguenots, of Alva in the Low Countries, of Claverhouse, of Bloody Mary, of Roger Williams, is always the story of the ultimate triumph of the cause being subjected to persecution.

Why Persecutions Fail! Causes, however, do not triumph just because they are persecuted. Persecution does not in itself possess a magic power to give triumph to any sort of cause. Persecution cannot give ultimate victory to an error or a wrong. It may, on occasion, give temporary advantage to an error or a wrong but it can never be the means of final victory.

Persecution fails because of the very nature of religion and of truth and of right and of conscience. No form of worship has any value or power except as it is the free, voluntary homage of the heart and conscience. Said Lactantius: "Religion cannot be imposed by force; the matter must be carried on by words rather than by blows that the will may be affected. Torture and piety are widely different; nor is it possible for truth to be united with violence or justice with cruelty. Nothing is so much a matter of free will as religion."

It is because truth and justice are never served by violence and force that persecutions always issue in the triumph of the causes they antagonize. The very disposition of persecutors to make men agree with them by compulsion is a strong presumption that there is something wrong with their own cause or with the motives prompting them. Schaff in his Church History says: "All sects, schools and parties, whether religious or political, when persecuted complain of injustice and plead for toleration, but few practice it when in power. The Church after its triumph over paganism forgot this lesson and for many centuries treated all Christian heretics as well as Jews and Gentiles just as the old Romans had treated the Christians, without distinction of creed or sect. Every state church from the times of the Christian emperors of Constantinople to the times of the Russian Czars and the South American Republics has more or less persecuted the dissenters in direct violation of the principles and practice of Christ and the apostles."

The same foolish dependence upon force appeared in the practice of Protestant groups as well. The Pilgrim fathers objected to having Roman Catholics and Anglicans in their new colony. They were not as tolerant toward Roger Williams and the Quakers as they might have been. Nor did the Quakers in the early colonial days seem to be like the quiet, peace-loving Quakers of today. It is charged by the Pilgrim fathers that some of the Quakers "continually disturbed the congregations assembled for worship." In Maryland religious liberty was granted to all, except to Unitarians, Jews and atheists. Even in Pennsylvania religious liberty was a bit circumscribed by the fact that only those who "believed Jesus Christ to be the Son of God and the Savior of the world" might vote or hold office.

What are the reasons for this inconsistency—asking for toleration when persecuted, and withholding toleration when in power? Is it due to selfishness—the desire to safeguard what we have? To mistaken and misinformed zeal—not fully recognizing the spiritual character of truth and religion?

How Persecutions Bring about Their Own Defeat. Persecutions inevitably must fail because of the essential character of truth and of religion—all compulsion in matters of conscience being contrary to their very nature. It is interesting to note how the great forces of life are leagued together to bring persecutions to naught. Among other factors which make for this failure are:

1. The publicity given the cause which is being persecuted. Attention is riveted upon its claims, people inquire into its values, and all its inherent worth has an enlarged opportunity to win people. Persecution is a great publicity agent.

2. Multiplication of centers of propagation. Persecution "scatters" the advocates and so spreads the area of its presentation.

3. Develops ingenuity and secret methods of presenting the cause. The Christians driven under cover (as in the catacombs) find new ways (symbols) to tell the gospel story.

4. Intensifies the courage of believers and makes them more devoted and earnest advocates of the faith. They see others die and they are ready to do anything to bear their testimony.

What other effects of persecution tend to defeat its aim?

The Effects on Those Persecuted in the Early Church. All these trials of the early Church purified its life. Always, in times of ease and quiet, superficial and hypocritical people unite with the church. It was so in the early days. "Lukewarm," "fairweather," "rice" Christians, as they are called on modern mission fields, ever attached themselves to Christ. He charged some with interest in the "loaves and fishes," and when his teaching grew too exacting, we are told that "from that time, many went back and walked no more with him."

The early persecutions separated the chaff from the wheat. The test of persecution revealed various types of Christians. There were three sorts of apostates and two kinds of the faithful:

1. The "sacrificati" were those who actually offered incense to the gods.
2. The "libellatici" were those who procured false witness of their return to paganism.
3. The "traditores" gave up their sacred books.
4. The "confessors" were those who fully confessed Christ before their accusers at the peril of their lives, but who did not suffer severely and were not killed.
5. The "martyrs" were those who died for their faith.

The persecutions developed a beautiful heroism and patience which is one of the loveliest of the fruits of Christianity. "Men and women of all classes, noble senators and learned bishops, illiterate artisans and poor slaves, loving mothers and delicate virgins, hoary-headed pastors and innocent children approached their tortures in no temper of unfeeling indifference and obstinate defiance, but like their divine Master, with calm self-possession, humble resignation, gentle meekness, cheerful faith, triumphant hope and forgiving charity."

The early persecution also developed, as it has often since, a wild spirit of fanaticism, with its corruption of sincere zeal and the setting up of an impious presumption of holiness which Paul may have had in mind when he wrote, "Though I give my body to be burned and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." With most unspiritual ambition many Christians sought with obvious self-righteousness to gain the acclaim and honor of the martyr. Schaff says: "Though this error was far less discreditable than the opposite extreme of cowardly fear of man, yet it was contrary to the instruction and the example of Christ and the apostles and to the spirit of true martyrdom, which consists in the union of sincere humility and power and possesses divine strength in the very consciousness of human weakness."

The Effect of the Modern Martyr Spirit. During the Boxer uprising in China in 1900, a Boxer came to a member of the London Missionary Society and said: "I have been present at many an execution and I want to ask two questions. First, what did the Christians mean, when kneeling, and knowing what fate was to come, they would say, 'We are not afraid to die, because we are going home'? What home? Second, how do you account for the fact that they prayed for the very people who were going to execute them? A religion that has a grit like that must have something in it. Tell me the secret."

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. The day Paul never forgot. See J. Paterson Smyth's Story of St. Paul's Life and Letters, pp. 23-27.

2. The motives prompting persecution.
   (a) The silversmiths and idol makers (Acts 19.24-28) were menaced in their business interests.
   (b) Nero—to turn away suspicion from himself.
   (c) Priests—professionally interested in the maintenance of the old forms of worship.

How far does personal profit or advantage create our antipathies, our hatreds? Do men ever from a pure love of truth and righteousness carry on persecution? See Schaff's History of Religion, pp. 31-84.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How do you understand Philip's leading? 2. Are we similarly led by God today? 3. What must have been Philip's thoughts when impelled to leave his successful work of evangelization in Samaria? 4. What do you think was the substance of Philip's words to the Ethiopian? 5. What missionary work is needed in Africa today?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

MARTYRS OF THE EARLY CHURCH

Beginning the Lesson. The word "martyr" is the English form of the Greek word which means "witness." The original meaning of a witness in the New Testament was one who attested his belief in the gospel by personal attitudes as well as by speech. Notice what Jesus said to the group of his disciples in Acts 1.8, "Ye shall be witnesses." He did not say "Ye shall bear witness," but "be witnesses." They were to be martyrs in their own persons.

"Martyr" now is generally used of one who has died in loyalty to a cause. Must one die to be a martyr—a witness? Could there be a living martyr? Did Paul mean this in Romans 12.1 when he said, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice"?

The best way for us to prove that we would be willing to die a martyr for our faith is to live as a martyr (a witness) for it.

The Birthday of The Martyrs. It soon became the custom in the early Church to celebrate the anniversary of a martyr's death. This day was called his "birthday." While emperors and other famous men were kept in remembrance on their real birthday, the Christian martyr was honored on the anniversary day of his death. In the old Roman calendar there was a common feast for all the martyrs. Gregory III, in 731, transferred it to November first and extended it to include all saints, now known as "All Saints Day." The night before was called "All Hallow Eve," i.e., the eve before All Saints Day. This has become our Hallowe'en.

The First Christian Martyr. 1. Stephen was the first Christian to be put to death for his faith in Jesus Christ. He had come into a place of prominence in the Jerusalem church because of the complaint of some of the poor of the church that they were not being treated fairly in the distribution of alms. He was one of seven to be chosen to look after this matter. It is said of him that he was a "man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" and soon he was preaching with great power and confuting all the Jews who disputed with him. They were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake, Acts 6.10. Why was he arrested? With what was he charged? How did he appear as he made his defense, Acts 6.15? What words of his enraged the Jews? What did they then do? What did Stephen say just before he died?

What do you admire most about Stephen? His courage to tell the Jews the whole truth? His sure confidence in Christ? His serene heroism in meeting his death? His forgiving spirit?

Other Early Martyrs. James, son of Zebedee, elder brother of John, was the first of the apostles to meet a martyr's death. Herod Agrippa had him beheaded.

Andrew, brother of Peter, was crucified, tradition says, being fastened to the cross not by nails but by ropes so that his pains might be more drawn out. An ancient writer tells of the apostle's sublime courage and fearlessness, in the following words:

"When Andrew saw the cross prepared he neither changed countenance nor color, as the weakness of mortal man is wont to do: neither did his blood shrink; neither did he fail in speech; his body fainted not; neither was his mind molested; his understanding did not fail him, but out of the abundance of his heart his mouth did speak and fervent charity did appear in his words. He said, 'O cross, most welcome and oft looked for: with a willing mind joyfully and desirously I come to thee, being the scholar of him who did hang on thee; because I have been always thy lover and have longed to embrace thee.'"

Felicitatas had seven sons, all believers. At the trial the Roman governor tried to persuade her to change her religion. She steadfastly refused. Bringing her sons before him he examined them one by one. Refusing to recant, they were condemned to die before her eyes. Januarius, the eldest, was scourged and pressed to death with great weights. Felix and Philip had their brains dashed out with a club. Sylvanus was thrown from a precipice. And the other three—Alexander, Vitalis and Martialis, were beheaded. The mother was then slain with the sword that had ended the lives of her three sons.

Telemachus died a martyr to his desire to end gladiatorial contests in Rome. It was during the great celebration of the Roman victory over Alaric, the Goth, that that monk made his famous plea: "Do not requite God's mercy in turning away the swords of the Goths, your enemies, by murdering each other." The great band of the gladiators, some carrying swords; some, three-pronged spears and nets; entered the arena and marched to where the Emperor sat, and with one voice greeted him, "Ave, Cæsar, Moritari te salutamus," "Hail, Cæsar, we who are about to die, salute thee." In the midst of the combat, a rudely clad man robed in the garments of a hermit leaped into the arena. "He was seen to be a man of rough but imposing presence, bareheaded and with sun-browned face. Without hesitation he advanced upon two gladiators engaged in a life-and-death struggle, and laying hands on them reproved them for shedding innocent blood, and then, turning to the thousands of angry faces ranged about him, he called out in a solemn, deep-toned voice that this brutality should cease. Wild cries arose to kill him and the gladiators stabbed him to death. He died, but not in vain. From the day Telemachus fell dead in the Colosseum, no other fight of gladiators was ever held there."

Giving One's Life. Those people who have left behind them enduring memorials of their lives in the hearts of mankind, and whose achievement is such as they would have wished to have remembered, are chiefly those who saved their lives in losing them. The soldier who dies for an ideal is one of these, but not the only one, and not always the worthiest. He is selected for praise more frequently, perhaps, than is his rightful share, but that is because his devotion takes a particularly dramatic form. He is honored, not as a destroyer of life, but as the giver of his own life.

Evangeline Booth photographed in the Coliseum at Rome where Christians were thrown to the lions in the early days of Christianity. In the background are the cages where the savage beasts were kept.

Jesus spoke no truer word than when he said that he who loses his life finds it, and he who saves it loses it. The most carefully saved lives are the most thoroughly useless, the most hopelessly lost. He who most fully lives to himself is he who most irrevocably loses the life which he hoards.

The artist who loses his ease and comfort in the ardor of his art; the physician who puts his professional skill high above his love of sport or rest; the poet, the inventor, the teacher, the prophet, who give themselves in unreckoning love of their work and the ends which that work is designed to serve—these are the ones who find the zest of living, the thrill of adventure, the reward of fidelity. And in the quiet everyday lives that most of us live, who is it among us that comes the nearest to happiness while on earth, and is most affectionately remembered after death? Is it not the father or mother, the son or daughter, the citizen or the toiler, who was least concerned about his own share of the dignities and the comforts of life and most eager to help and serve those of his own family or his own community?

The Arctic explorer, the tracer of broad rivers back to their fountains concealed in primeval wildernesses, the man who bares his arm to the lancet-thrust that his blood may save a life—these are not men to be pitied; these are the men who have lived. The prophets and martyrs were men and women of

widely differing temperaments, but oftener than the average of human beings they were of those who meet life with a smile and die with a shout of triumph. They found their lives in the glad giving of them.—The Youth's Companion.

Refusing the Easy Way Out. The early Christians were only asked to cast a pinch of incense on the altar of the Emperor: that was the easy way. The other way was the lions and the torture and death. Why not do the easy thing and confess Christ in their hearts? It meant peace and quietness. Some did it, but many others refused deliverance and were tortured.

George Wishart and Patrick Hamilton in Scotland had the same choice: to hold their tongues and live unharmed, or to preach the gospel of Christ and face burning and the stake. They refused the easy way out, and were martyred at St. Andrews.

For Cranmer and Latimer and Ridley there was an easy way of escape: to deny Christ, to hold their peace, to forget their conscience; but, instead, they chose to be loyal to Christ and conscience. They were burned, and shot, and hanged, on the hills of Scotland, and in the market-places of England, and it thrills us to read of their courage and faithfulness.

Jesus Christ chose the hard way though it led straight to the cross. Peter, because he loved Jesus and couldn't bear to think of his suffering, urged him to take the easy way out. Jesus called Peter "Satan" for suggesting it, and "set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem."

Why didn't God deliver Jesus and all these others? I don't know. Only God knows. But I know that the world's history would have been a poorer thing if he had, and that it is richer because of their brave and heroic choice. The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church: the suffering of the Covenanters put iron into the soil of Scotland, and the cross of Christ is the salvation of the world.

Is there anything like this in your lives? Are you not often tempted to take the easy way out? The shabby, cowardly, dishonorable way, because it is the easy way?

At school you have done something wrong. You are asked, "Did you do it?" The teacher will take your word. The easy way is to say "No," to tell a lie and escape. No one will ever know but yourself and God. The other way is to tell the truth and take the consequences; certainly some punishment, for you have deserved it. Take the hard way always.

For one thing, the easy way isn't really easy. Peter took it when he denied Christ by the fire in the High Priest's courtyard; and in a little while Peter was crying bitterly. Cranmer took it when he recanted. He found safety, but he didn't find peace, and soon we see him holding the hand that signed his recantation in the fire till it shriveled away. The pain of that was nothing to pain of a shamed conscience.

Take the hard way always. It is a man's way. It may bring pain; but pain will pass and shame won't. It is manly to bear pain, but shame takes away your manhood. Every time a boy or girl refuses the easy way out and takes the hard way, whatever the consequences may be, something is added to the world's golden store of heroism and high faithfulness.—Stuart Robertson, in The Expository Times.

Sentence Sermons.

"'Tis as hard at duty's call
To lay one's life down day by day,
As to lay it down once for all."

On the ordinary levels of ordinary days one's way may be as heroic as on the extraordinary heights of extraordinary opportunities which come but seldom.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where had Jesus bade his followers witness for him? 2. Until Stephen's martyrdom, where only had they borne witness? 3. Who was Philip? 4. How do we know what sort of man he was? 5. What is Philip called in Acts 21.8? 6. Did the Ethiopian have a book like our Bible in his hands? 7. How was the prophecy of verse 32 fulfilled in Jesus? 8. Where was Gaza? Azotus? Cæsarea? Ethopia? 9. How do you understand the expression, "the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip"? 10. What foreign-born boys or girls do you know? 11. Have you ever invited them to your church school that they might learn of Christ?

LESSON V—AUGUST 2

PHILIP'S MISSIONARY LABORS

GOLDEN TEXT: They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word. Acts 8.4

LESSON Acts 8.5-40 DEVOTIONAL READING Matthew 13.3b-9

ACTS 8.26 But an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert. 27 And he arose and went: and behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem to worship; 28 and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. 30 And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? 31 And he said, How can I, except some one shall guide me? And he besought Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 Now the passage of the scripture which he was reading was this,

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;
And as a lamb before his shearer is dumb,
So he openeth not his mouth:
33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away:
His generation who shall declare?
For his life is taken from the earth.

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other? 35 And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus. 36 And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, "here is" water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. 39 And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached the gospel to all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. Reading and Explaining God's Word, verses 22-35. As we saw last week the persecution of Christ's followers after the martyrdom of Stephen forced them to flee from Jerusalem, and they went everywhere preaching the word. Philip, like Stephen one of the seven deacons who, early in the history of the Church had been selected to help in the work, went to Samaria, where he was very successful in gaining converts for Christ. In the midst of his labors there he was suddenly directed to leave that field and go southward on the road that led from Jerusalem to Gaza. Our text says that an angel of the Lord gave him this commission, but this does not tell us who was the chosen messenger. "A vision, a dream, a human agent, some natural circumstance or instrument, all these are in Holy Scripture or in contemporary literature styled God's angels or messengers. Men saw then more deeply than we do, recognized the hand of a Superintending Providence where we behold only secondary agents, and in their filial confidence spoke of angels where we should only recognize some natural power."

Philip obeyed the divine compulsion, and met a man of great authority, the treasurer of Candace, queen of the Ethopians, who was returning from Jerusalem where he had been to worship. "Candace" was not a proper name, but, like "Pharaoh" in Egypt, or "Cæsar" in Rome, was the title of the ruler. Tradition gives this man of Ethopia the name of Indich, and Irenæus and Eusebius make him the founder of Christianity in Arabia Felix and Ethiopia. Since he had been worshiping in the temple at Jerusalem he was probably a proselyte, a heathen converted to Judaism. When Philip saw him he was sitting in his chariot and reading the prophet Isaiah. "Like a man reading at daybreak and tilting his book at every angle to catch the beams of the rising sun, so this African adjusted his soul to every ray of truth that he could intercept."

"Pondering the great blessing of salvation which came to this officer, we are first arrested by the fact of his readiness for the blessing. There were

attention, predisposition, sympathy, expectation. All high blessing is ours as we wait in a certain state of preparedness, ripeness, susceptibility, and desire" (W. L. Watkinson).

The man was reading aloud, as was the way with Orientals. Jewish rabbis taught that what was read aloud would be remembered, and they often insisted upon this practice. Philip felt impelled to approach the chariot.

"The Spirit is like the mysterious Ariel in Shakespeare's Tempest, working invisibly here, there, and everywhere. First, he gives Philip general guidance: 'Arise, and go toward the South.' He creates an active trend or tendency in the life. He starts us upon journeys whose precise endings are still unknown. Then, he gives Philip particular guidance: 'Go near, and join thyself to his chariot.'

"If I, too, would have the constant guidance of the Spirit, three things are needful:—(1) I must keep sensitive toward God. To this end I must pray and praise without ceasing. (2) I must listen for his voice: His voice is always the 'upward calling.' I must hearken to my conscience, and to the quiet whisperings in my soul. (3) I must obey the voice. Every time I obey I improve my organ of hearing, and the Spirit can tell me deeper secrets" (J. H. Jowett).

"Understandest thou what thou readest?" at once Philip questioned. A commentator points out that there is a play upon the sound here: the Greek words are "ginoskeis," understandest, and "anaginoskeis," readest, and may be translated, Do you heed what you read?

"The Spirit had led Philip, but there was room for human initiative. How was the stranger's interest to be aroused? By some challenging word. This mingling of the divine impulse and the human judgments is worth noting from time to time. Impulses come from on high and from within, but we have to use our ordinary faculties to know how to obey. God still gives people what the Quakers call a 'concern,' but we have to think out for ourselves the method" (R. C. Gillie).

"How can I, except some one shall guide me?" the treasurer returned, and at once invited Philip to enter his chariot and sit with him.

"How can any soul travel through life by the aid of a map which he does not understand?" (The Youth's Companion).

The passage which the treasurer was reading was Isaiah 53.7, 8. "Of whom speaketh the prophet thus?" he asked.

"The way to receive good instruction is to ask good questions."

"The earlier Jewish authorities all understood chapter fifty-three of Isaiah to refer to the coming Messiah; the later Jewish writers treat it either as a composition of Jeremiah or Josiah, and as referring to the writer himself, or as fulfilled in and by the sufferings inflicted upon the Jewish nation as a nation" (Lyman Abbott). "Now Hebrew scholars generally regard 'the servant of the Lord,' in the latter part of Isaiah, as the devout and faithful Israel in times of persecution. But the famous prophecy contains much deeper truths than their experiences could illustrate. Although it may well be that the writer only had these people in mind, his inspired utterance went beyond them, and never completely realized its signification till Jesus came and suffered and died. After this his disciples saw the perfect application of the prophecy to the Christ's atoning death. Apparently it had never been so interpreted before. But now the key exactly fits the lock" (Walter F. Adeney).

And Philip opened his mouth—this is a Hebrew expression indicating that the words uttered were not spoken by chance but with deliberate purpose—and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus. Doubtless he told the treasurer how Jesus had fulfilled the prophecy, and how by his death he had provided a way of salvation for all who accepted him.

When Philip jumped into the Ethopian's chariot and interpreted the words of Isaiah to him, they glowed with a new meaning for his listener. And yet Philip did not talk about Isaiah and his times. His heart and his

mind were too full of what had been happening in Jerusalem. "He told of his own spiritual experiences and of what had taken place within his own knowledge. Then he read from the old book and said, 'This is what these words mean.' The past is dead till it lives again in the present experience. Then it comes again in spiritual beauty and power. You do not understand the Bible when you read it merely as a record of what happened to other men who long ago have done their work and passed away. But some day you have a vivid experience of your own. You know the meaning of temptation, of contrition, of self-sacrifice. You have a sense of divine reality, then you take up the old book and it flashes light upon this experience of yours. You understand what it means."

II. Accepting God's Word, verses 36-40. "Faith within and water without were ready," as Bengel says, and the Ethiopian asked to be baptized when they reached a pool. Philip gladly baptized him, though a Gentile and a Negro, and then was led by divine prompting to leave him and go to Azotus and then on to Cæsarea. As he passed through village after village he preached everywhere that "This Jesus is the Christ." Twenty years later Paul came to Cæsarea and received a hearty welcome at Philip's house from Philip himself and his four daughters who were active church workers.

The treasurer went on his way rejoicing.

"Are you a Philip, an expert in the way of Christ? If so, should you meet one who is groping for light and hungry for the true bread, you can tell him straightway of Christ. Do you know the way so well that you can show it to some one else and send him away rejoicing?" (Maltbie D. Babcock).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

He was reading the prophet Isaiah, verse 28. The scroll from which he was reading was probably the Greek version known to us as the Septuagint, for this version was commonly used outside of Palestine, and the quotation in verses 23 and 33 is from it. Philip heard him reading, for he was reading aloud. It is still the custom in Oriental lands to read aloud, even though alone. In Moslem schools the scholars read the Koran aloud. There are thousands of students in the famous El-Azhar University at Cairo, who sit on the floor and read aloud.

The passage of Scripture which he was reading, verse 32. The law and the prophets were read in regular order in the synagogue service, and because this section from Isaiah was the one read at the Feast of Tabernacles, it has been suggested that the eunuch had been to Jerusalem for that festival. It is quite probable, however, that in Jerusalem he heard about the life and death of Jesus and the claims made by the disciples that Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies of the Christ, and therefore he was reading the prophecies of Isaiah and trying to determine for himself whether the prophet was describing his own sufferings or those of the promised Christ.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

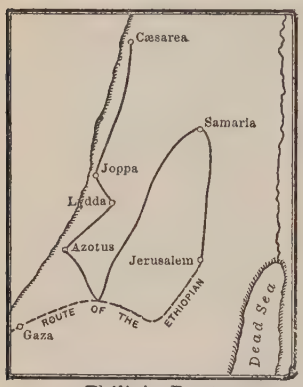
After being forced to leave Jerusalem (Acts 8.1) the disciples took up the work of preaching the gospel in other lands. The first foreign missionary work which Luke records was in Samaria. Samaria was in truth a foreign field, for Jews hitherto had cordially hated Samaritans and would have "no dealings with them." Philip, one of "the Seven," known later as Philip the Evangelist (Acts. 21.8), probably little realized the greatness of the movement he was inaugurating when he went to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to the people the Christ. He found the fields white unto harvest; the people accepted the good tidings concerning the Kingdom of God and were baptized. There was great joy among them when many with unclean spirits, the palsied, and the lame, were healed.

Report reached the apostles at Jerusalem that Philip had preached the word of God to the Samaritans and large numbers of them had believed and been baptized. Could it be possible that the Kingdom of God was to include these despised people? The news made so great an impression on the apostles that they sent Peter and John to Samaria to investigate the new departure. Peter

and John were satisfied that the divine purpose was being carried out, and they gave their sanction and encouragement to the movement by praying for the people and laying their hands upon them. The divine approval was shown by the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the people.

On their way back to Jerusalem the apostles themselves preached the gospel in many villages of Samaria.

The great highway from Egypt northward passed through Gaza, which in early Hebrew times was a Philistine town and famous as the scene of some of Samson's exploits. In New Testament times Gaza was on the coast some fifty miles southwest of Jerusalem. The site of the old Gaza, two miles from the coast, was now in ruins, having been destroyed in 96 B.C. Josephus and Strabo refer to the old site as desert, and the words of verse twenty-six, "the same is desert," probably refer to this site and not to the road from Jerusalem as a whole. Somewhere on this road Philip fell in with the Ethiopian.



Philip's Route

Ethiopia was the name given to all Africa south of Egypt. In the northern part of Ethiopia, between the two rivers which unite to form the blue Nile, was the kingdom called Meroe by the Romans. This kingdom was ruled by queens whose royal title was Candace. It was doubtless from this kingdom that the queen's officer had journeyed down the Nile Valley, across the Isthmus, up the coast-road to Gaza, and then over the hill country to Jerusalem.

Azotus was the ancient Ashdod, twenty miles above Gaza. Philip continued northward, preaching in the cities on the way, till he reached Cæsarea, the Roman capital of the province of Judea.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

When Lord Shaftesbury was teaching this lesson one day he asked a boy why the Ethiopian went on his way rejoicing. The boy's answer is interesting, though, of course, it can have no home-thrust for you. He replied, "Because Philip had done teaching him."

"Understandest thou what thou readest?" It is a lamentable fact that the majority of educated men and women lose very early in life the power to read and understand books that require deep thought. They cease to exercise their minds on such books and the minds grow rusty, so to speak, and require a great amount of oiling to get them in working order again. One of the many rewards that come to a Sunday-school teacher is the fact that his constant study of the Bible keeps his mind alert and frees him from the necessity of oiling his mental works. To understand the Bible requires deep thought and constant study. It requires light from other minds. The self-satisfied teacher who refuses help because he deems himself already sufficiently well-informed, or because, as he says, his study must be wholly his own, lacks the Ethiopian's wisdom.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE GOSPEL BREAKS OVER THE FRONTIER

Beginning the Lesson. Some one has told this story of the French Quaker, Stephen Grellet.

One day he felt strongly impressed that it was his duty to enter a certain forest in Canada and preach a sermon. He obeyed the impulse, but on arriving at the appointed forest, could discover no audience whatever. However, he acted upon the command that had been impressed upon him, and delivered a sermon, apparently to the forest trees. Years afterwards he was accosted by a man who told him that he had been hiding at that place, intent on robbery; and, to his intense astonishment, had heard a sermon which was the means of his conversion.

This story is somewhat similar to our story about Philip. Philip, however,

had the advantage of talking directly to the one whom he was sent to teach, though when he started toward the South he did not know why he was impelled to take this journey nor whom he was to meet. There were the Ethiopian and his need; there were Philip and his ability to answer that need; and there was God who brought them together.

Continue with Explanations and Comments.

"The Glueing Method." "Go near, and glue thyself to this chariot," is Dr. A. C. Dixon's rendering of the command in verse 29, giving the Greek word its literal meaning. Speaking about what he called "the glueing method," Dr. Dixon said:—

"Go near. Get near some one. Approach somebody for Christ. Do it in the right way, but do it, and begin to work for the salvation of some individual with a spirit which indicates that you are going to succeed. Not just touch and leave, but glue, a determination, a purpose that is formed of God, a resolve that by the help of the Holy Spirit you are going to win that soul to Jesus, if it takes ten minutes, if it takes ten hours, or ten weeks, ten months, or ten years; glueing yourself to that individual—that is God's method."

The Work of "Prophet Harris." The Ethiopian came from the heart of Africa. He was an anxious inquirer for the good news, athirst for God. His consciously felt need was satisfied by the missionary from Jerusalem. Other men in the heart of Africa are longing for like satisfaction from missionaries out of the West. Their "Prophet Harris" promised them the missionaries would come. What should be done for them? What may our part in the work be?

You know the story of the famous "Prophet Harris," how after he had received a smattering of Christian instruction from a missionary in Liberia he suddenly appeared on the Gold Coast and Ivory Coast of West Africa and preached a gospel of repentance. He reached great masses of people with his message, and converts multiplied until the civil authorities became alarmed, as they always do when great numbers of Africans unite in any way. The white people always fear some sort of uprising among the blacks, and they are far outnumbered by the latter. They asked Harris to return to Liberia, which he did, and there he has recently died. But the "Harris churches" persist in West Africa with surprising vitality. There are said to be about forty thousand who call themselves Christians. Most of them are illiterate, and many of the churches have not a single member who can read the Bible. They are still looking for the missionaries whom their "prophet" promised them.

The Spirit of the Lord Caught Up David Livingstone. The story of David Livingstone's providential guidance is familiar. It was but a short time after his spiritual awakening at the age of twelve that he read an appeal to the churches of Britain and America on behalf of China. This so aroused him that he decided to go to China. His decision followed, as he said, a feeling "that the salvation of men ought to be the chief desire and aim of every Christian." The next thing he decided was that he ought to be a medical missionary.

About the time that he was ready to go to China, the Opium War broke out, and Englishmen were prevented from going there. Robert Moffat called at a boarding house in Aldersgate Street where Livingstone lived and addressed the students. Livingstone was interested, and in a later interview he heard of the great plain where, as Dr. Moffat said, "I have seen in the morning sun the smoke of a thousand villages, where no missionary has ever been." At last Livingstone said, "What is the use of my waiting for the end of this abominable China War? I will go at once to Africa."

Thus the Spirit of the Lord "caught up" David Livingstone, deterred him from going to China, and took him to Africa. And thus the "open sore" of the African slave-trade was laid bare to the view of the world.—Missionary Comments.

The Pioneering Spirit Needed in Our Land. With the passing of pioneer days and frontiers the American people are too apt to assume that pioneer obligations and responsibilities have ceased. We think of the United States as a

homogeneous country, civilized and prosperous in every part, unified in its political and social life, with equal opportunity for its citizens and equality before the law.

The actual America is very different from that ideal state. If physical frontiers have passed, other frontiers of every sort remain. There are the frontiers of mere subsistence where, despite the national wealth, multitudes of worthy people find it hard to eke out an existence. There are the frontiers of industrial life where, despite all that trade unionism and other coöperative and cohesive forces have accomplished, many people still work long hours, and more people than some of us realize, seven days a week. There are frontiers of literacy where, despite the public schools, masses of people have little real education for life. There are frontiers of social opportunity, where the privileges that constitute the life environment of the few are never known by the many. There are the religious frontiers where so many either have little religion at all, or where religious faith and purpose are mingled with ignorance and prejudice. In every sphere the frontiers persist; and there are as real tasks for earnest people in building up American civilization as ever faced the pioneers of territorial expansion.

It is these things that make the need and opportunity for home missions so insistent. If anybody has ideals to proclaim, or live, America's manifold frontiers offer a field that could hardly be more inviting were it made to order. Virgin fields of influence and service are as open and as ready to hand as the virgin forests and deserts that lured the pioneers of yesterday. The man of earnest purpose who cannot find a task in present-day America is afflicted with blindness or with spiritual futility.

Nor are the tasks that confront Christian, cultured, wealthy Americans—any among us that may have more of anything good or useful than somebody else possesses—merely optional. Upon the performance of these tasks and upon the ideals and service which enter into them depend the future of the nation. It is not too much to say that the very privileges and welfare of the privileged and well-to-do depend ultimately upon their attitude toward the unprivileged and ill-to-do.

Probably the saving forces of the nation were actually never stronger than at the present hour. But there must be question at times whether the Church leads in those forces as it once did; and also whether the Church's home missionary aggressiveness has increased at all in proportion to the increased resources of church people since the days when the missionary-educator moved forward with the caravan, or actually led the way. The Church must not be content to follow civilization as a rear-guard salvaging corps picking up the stragglers. That may be in itself a necessary and worthy thing, but it is incident to progress in which the Church should lead. What the Church needs today is a rebaptism of the pioneer spirit that will lead Christian people out into the vision of definite tasks and obligations in extending the frontiers of real living as the pioneers of yesterday extended its environment.—From an Editorial in The Congregationalist.

Frontiers for Youth Today. In the spiritual realm the frontiers are farther out in front of us than in any other realm. Who is the man, and where is he, who feels comfortable in the present spiritual experiences of men? If ever there were frontiers for youth, it is in the spiritual realm of the present. The largest possible contribution for the future is in the hands of sincere, devoted, and effective men and women who know how to be religious and not fanatical; who know how to be spiritual and not spoiled in statement; who know how to live a life that somebody else would love to parallel.

A specialist in business recently sent out a message to the business world saying: "The need of the hour is not more factories or materials, not more railroads or steamships, not more armies or navies, but rather, more education based on the plain teachings of Jesus."

Ministers, missionaries, teachers, statesmen, men of business and profession, all have a task to match their lives by the Man of Galilee, and make new discoveries, and reach new heights, and have new experiences out on the plains that slope toward God by the way of Olivet and Calvary. Religion is still propagated by prejudice; few there are who can be found out on the frontiers of spiritual attainment where they can see Jesus only against their

future sky. Join your life with him. I do not know where it will lead you, and you need not care, if you go with him.

I was with five hundred men, from the ends of the earth, who came to reckon with their differences in religion. To their great surprise, their differences were not so marked as their agreements. Each group was making its way across the world, feeling it was quite alone, and here they discovered, at the turn of the way, that they had found travelers going in their direction. Let us join this new company, with our faces to the future, our vision become clearer, and the certainties of life assured. Have such a clear vision of him set against the skyline of your future that you may not perish from the earth, but live with the everlasting.—From a Baccalaureate Sermon, by Chancellor Clark of the American University.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. "The task of religious pioneering is the alluring task of finding ever new frontiers for the soul."

2. What is the present attitude toward pioneer missions?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why was Paul's persecution of the disciples up to the time of his visit to Damascus confined to Jerusalem? 2. Could his zeal in wishing to persecute the Christians even in Damascus have been a wild effort to combat a pricking conscience? 3. How may his thoughts on the way to Jerusalem have prepared him for his vision? 4. What were his experiences in the first few years after his conversion? 5. What did Jesus mean in his words in Jn. 3.3? 6. Give instances of other sudden conversions. 7. Give instances of conversions the opposite of Paul's. 8. Do some good men need conversion? 9. How does a child enter the Kingdom?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

PIONEERING FOR JESUS

Beginning the Lesson. Dr. Robert E. Speer says that the shortest and simplest description of the work of missionaries is in three words: making Jesus known. Those three words exactly describe the work of Philip.

Was Philip an apostle? Who was he? To what city did he belong? What led him to leave Jerusalem?

When Philip had to leave Jerusalem because of persecution he found a fine opportunity for preaching in Samaria, the country of the woman of the well to whom Jesus talked, and of the Good Samaritan in Jesus' parable; the country that would not give Jesus a night's lodging and therefore John wished to call down upon the people fire from heaven. In Samaria Philip was preaching to large crowds when the Spirit of God said to him one day, "You must leave here and go to a desert place." Philip must have been much surprised at such a direction, but he did not question nor argue. He went at once. The rest of the beautiful story you know: what is it?

An Ethiopian
From a Pylon at Karnak

Thus Philip, you see, was the first to preach the gospel in Samaria, and the first to win for Christ and baptize a heathen convert. He showed the Early Church that it had an immense field of service open to it—the whole Gentile world. He was quite unaware of the importance and far-reaching influence of his actions. He was simply doing his duty, and knew nothing of the great results that were to come from his faithfulness.

A Parallel Case in Modern Missions. During the Crimean War a Japanese named Murata, who was in charge of the defense of the harbor of Nagasaki, found an English book floating on the water. After much inquiry he learned that it was a book which told about the Creator and about Jesus, and that there was a translation of it in Chinese. He sent to China for that translation, and began to study the New Testament. Years later Dr. Verbeck came to Nagasaki and began his great work as a teacher in Japanese with a Bible class of two young men, one of whom was a younger brother of Murata. After several years of teaching a messenger came to Verbeck from Murata, asking

for explanations of certain portions of the book which he could not understand without a teacher. For nearly three years this messenger came and went between teacher and pupil, and then in 1866, to Verbeck's great joy, Murata himself came and with him his brother, his two sons, and a train of followers.

"I have long known you in my mind, and desired to converse with you, and I am very happy that, in God's providence, I am at last permitted this privilege," said Murata in his greeting. They discussed the Bible and religion for many hours, during which Murata said: "I cannot tell you my feelings when for the first time I read the account of the character and work of Jesus Christ. I had never seen, or heard, or imagined such a Person. I was filled with admiration, overwhelmed with emotion, and taken captive by the record of his nature and life."

And when, like the Ethiopian, he asked to be baptized, Dr. Verbeck, like Philip, could go on his way rejoicing.

A Missionary Pioneer in the Philippines. When the first missionaries went to the island of Panay, one of the Philippine group, they were amazed at the number of people in that Roman Catholic country who came to hear them and seemed so eager to have the Bible explained. Nine months only had passed when there was brought to the missionaries a petition saying that the thirteen thousand signers were Protestants and wished to be taught and organized into churches. The missionaries at first thought the people did not know what they were asking for, but they became convinced of the earnestness of these peasants. It was not till some time afterwards that they learned how the way had been prepared for the gospel. Padra Juan, a Roman Catholic priest, had come to Luzon forty years before, and after a while had been sent to the penal station in Paragua Island by the friars because he was "teaching false doctrines," and there he had died. He had gained the love of the peasants, and they had believed in him. He had taught them that Christ was their Savior, he had read to them from his Bible, and he had told them that white men, different from the friars, would some day come to teach them, and they would know they were true teachers because they would have the same Book. The missionaries brought the same Book, the people had learned of Padre Juan's prophecy from their fathers, and they were ready to receive them as the true teachers. Padre Juan was the "living way" that guided their feet.

Ready for the Interpreter. A missionary in Canada once looked up from his desk where he was writing to see his room filled with Indians. They had entered so quietly that he had not heard them coming. He asked them whence they came. "We came a distance of fourteen nights," they answered, for they reckoned distance by the number of nights on the way. "We have the Great Book which we can read, but we cannot understand it." He asked them what missionary had taught them to read, and they replied that they had never seen a missionary. They lived in the Hudson Bay region, hundreds of miles away from the nearest missionary station, but their hunting grounds adjoined those of Christian Indians, and from them they had heard about the Great Book. "They read and explained it to us," said these men, "and last winter we all learned to read, every one in our village." The missionary could scarcely believe that they had learned to read without a white teacher, but when he opened the book, which they had obtained from an agent of the Hudson Bay Company, he found their words were true, they could read easily and correctly. Like the Ethiopian treasurer, they wanted a guide, and they had traveled a distance of fourteen nights over the snow to find one.

Sentence Sermons. Every disciple must be a discipler.—A. J. Gordon.

There is no book that will repay time spent upon its pages as will the Word of God.—F. B. Meyer.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Was Paul a bad man before his conversion? 2. Had he ever refused to do the thing he thought right? 3. Do his words in our text from 1 Timothy excuse his persecution of Christians? 4. Of what was Paul naturally thinking on the way to Damascus? 5. Where is Damascus? 6. Read Paul's own story of that day, Acts 22.3-15. 7. How was Zacchæus converted? 8. How did Andrew and John become Christians? 9. How was the Ethiopian converted? 10. What do we mean by conversion?

LESSON VI—AUGUST 9

SAUL CONVERTED AND COMMISSIONED

GOLDEN TEXT: I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision. Acts 26.19

LESSON Acts 9.1-31; 22.3-21; Galatians 1.11-17; 1 Timothy 1.12-17
DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 6.1-8

ACTS 9.1 But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. 3 And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: 4 and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he "said," I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: 6 but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. 7 And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man. 8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing; and they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink.

17 And Ananias departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. 18 And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized; 19 and he took food and was strengthened.

1 TIMOTHY 1.12 I thank him that enabled me, "even" Christ Jesus our Lord, for that he counted me faithful, appointing me to "his" service; 13 though I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: howbeit I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief; 14 and the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Persecutor's Zeal, Acts 9.1, 2. While Philip and the others "scattered abroad" were busy extending and building up the Church, Paul was busily persecuting the disciples in Jerusalem. Breathing out threatening and slaughter, he lived, as it were, in an atmosphere of hot hatred, fury and destruction. "The words 'breathing out' are expressive often of a deep, agitating emotion, as we then breathe more rapidly and even violently in order to supply the oxygen needed to supply the exhausted vitality consumed by the emotion. It is thus expressive of violent anger" (Albert Barnes).

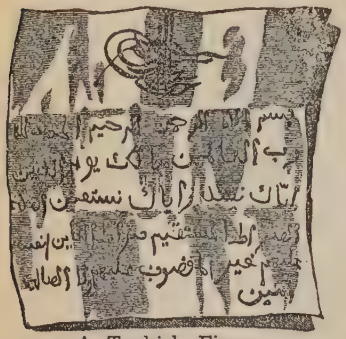
Paul's antipathy to all who followed "the Way" must have left a weakened impact on his physical life. High states of uncontrolled emotion are physically very debilitating. Anger, malice, hatred, ill-will, all cost in physical energy and health. There can be no doubt that not a little of the physical ills of men and women find their inception in violent emotional excesses. Even selfish attitudes, petty dislikes, unkind criticism, harbored slights, nursed grudges and many other emotions take heavy toll in physical ills.

Paul never forgot what he had done at Jerusalem. We have a record of no fewer than seven times when by tongue and pen he recalled his conduct as a persecutor: Acts 22.4, 5; 22.19; 26.9-11; 1 Cor. 15.9; Gal. 1.13; Phil. 3.6; 1 Tim. 1.13.

Paul asked the high priest for letters enlisting the aid of leaders of synagogues at Damascus in seizing men and women of the Way to bring them bound to Jerusalem, for the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem had no authority in Damascus. The use of the plural here indicates that there was a large Jewish population in Damascus, a fact borne out by Josephus, who affirms that "ten thousand Jews were slaughtered in a massacre in Damascus in Nero's time, and that the wives of the Damascenes were, most all of them, addicted to the Jewish religion." The city may have been chosen by Paul for this special visit because of disturbing rumors concerning the increase in

number of those who followed the Way. "With the ambition which knows no rest, and in the pride of his Pharisaic heart, Paul strikes out with the idea to reverse the maxim of the Crucified Leader of the hated sect, and go into all the world and suppress the gospel in every creature" (Henry Drummond).

II. His Vision, Acts 9.3-9. As Paul neared Damascus, suddenly there shone round about him a light from heaven. It was about midday, and the light was "above the brightness of the sun." He fell to the earth and heard a voice saying unto him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Paul could only ask in return, "Who art thou, Lord?" Then came the answer, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."



A Turkish Firman
A Special Decree Sanctioning an Undertaking

"Whether the appearance of Jesus was subjective or objective—merely the result of the working of the apostle's own mind or due to the personal action of the living Jesus, through whatever channel—Paul himself would have had no hesitation as to the answer, since he puts it on the same level as the other appearances after the Resurrection, which are certainly regarded as objective, though, probably, not as material" (C. W. Emmet). "We intend no irreverence when we say in regard to Paul that the sunburst on the Damascus road seems to have been a last resort on the part of God. If Paul could not read the message of the patience of the Christians whom he cast into prison, if the shining face of the dying Stephen could not break through his prejudice and misunderstanding, if the silent goading could not prick him to comprehension, it would seem that nothing was left but to resort to the extraordinary. The Almighty's willingness to do this is measured by the worth of the object attained. It would seem to be worth while to resort to the extraordinary to transform Saul the persecutor into Paul the apostle" (Francis J. McConnell).

"The language of the text, you say, makes Paul out as one extraordinarily favored. He had heavenly visions, and things of that sort do not come to people now any more than angels in white robes meet them in their walks. But there we need not agree with you. The prophets and apostles had not a monopoly of these things. All our young men see visions, all our maidens dream dreams. They do not come to us quite as they came to St. Paul, but they do come. Light shines around us at times which is not the sunlight, which is rather made up of rays which fall from the face of God. We have hours of revelation when we see and feel noble things, yea, heavenly things, and a distinct voice, coming from without or within, invites us to enter the fellowship of brave, pure, earnest, God-fearing lives. These visions come in the sanctuary, or during the hours of quiet thought, or when we are reading some bracing and inspiring book. And we know that they are heavenly visions; we know that we ought to obey them.

"When the visions come, turn not away from them. Whatever call it be that shows you the possibility of living a purer and lovelier life, delay not to accept it; for that way lies the true wealth and happiness" (J. S. Greenhough).

The Revised Version omits, with the best manuscripts, the words, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. What wilt thou have me to do?" and so brings the vision and the duty into close proximity: "I am Jesus. . . . Arise! Go!" Paul is not given a full account now of what he is to do. He is told merely, "Arise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." It is at the hands of Ananias that Paul is to receive the detailed, practical implications of his vision. God makes natural contacts the guiding ministers of his grace.

Vision calls for practical deeds. Too often, men let their great dreams,

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HEAD OF PAUL

their visioned ideals, their challenging change in value estimates growing out of some deep experience, fade out unused. To face a vision means to face a task.

The other members of Paul's caravan did not share in the vision; they stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man. Paul says in Acts 22.9 that "they heard not the voice of him that spake to me." There is no need of trying to harmonize these statements: "such variations in unimportant details only accentuate the general harmony" and bring out the fact that the others were only spectators, not participants. Unblinded by the glory which blinded Paul, they led him by the hand into the city.

III. His Commission, Acts 9.10-19. "Paul had been convicted of sin, but he had not yet found peace. He had lost his old life, but had not yet found the new one. He had been stunned, but he is not yet free" (J. H. Jowett). Some brave and warm-hearted believer must be found who would go to him, sympathize with him and lead him into the fellowship of the Way. Such a man was Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well reported by all the Jews that dwelt at Damascus, Acts 22.12.

"Here is another illustration of the invariable work of the Holy Spirit: he will arrest and convict, but he sends Ananias to complete the work" (F. B. Meyer).

In a vision it was borne in upon Ananias that he must go to the man whom he rightly regarded as the arch-enemy of Christ's followers. At first he questioned the wisdom of giving any attention to the man who had done so much evil in Jerusalem, and whose purpose in coming to Jerusalem was to imprison those of the Way. Why restore sight to such a deadly menace?

God does not ask for a stupid, unquestioning faith. He wants men to think his thoughts after him. Doubts and questionings are not to be deplored, but are to be made a means of better understanding the divine will. Perhaps one of the most obvious weaknesses of much faith is its blind supineness. We need to say, "Why, Lord?" "I am not sure of its wisdom, Lord"; "What dost thou mean to do?"

But the Lord said unto him, "Go thy way; for he is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel." He was a "chosen vessel," that is, a chosen instrument. Notice what to be chosen by God means. Often it has been thought to mean that God's blessing —good gifts, power, privilege—would be bestowed on those so chosen. But here, as always, to be chosen by God means service—a task to undertake. It means the privilege of sacrifice, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

Ananias obeyed. Going to the street called Straight there in the house of Judas he found Paul who prayed. Then he tenderly put his hands upon Paul and called him with gentle kindness "Brother Saul." Must this not have reminded Paul of Stephen's gracious prayer and of the same brotherly kindness which many of his prisoners had shown?

The power of words of address uttered in true friendliness and genuine brotherliness is too mighty to measure. We covet great power to work out life's vast problems of race and war and greed and creed, when what is most needed are such words as "Brother Saul" leaping from enlightened and generous hearts.

"The Lord hath sent me that thou mayest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit," were Ananias' words as he laid his hands upon Paul, thus, as it were, ordaining him for his work. Paul's sight was restored, and he was baptized, and doubtless shared also in the breaking of bread of the Lord's Supper.

IV. His Early Experiences in the Service of Christ, Acts 9.20-31. Paul tarried "certain days" with the disciples at Damascus. Luke makes no mention of his sojourn in Arabia, to which Paul refers in Galatians 1.17. Read the account of his being forced to leave Damascus by way of a basket let down from the city walls, of the natural hesitation of disciples in Jerusalem to receive him

until Barnabas vouched for his conversion, of his life being in danger there from the Grecian Jews, and of his being sent to Tarsus.

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was much multiplied.

V. His Gratitude, 1 Timothy 1.12-14. Afterwards when writing to Timothy, Paul the missionary thanks "him that enabled me, even Jesus Christ our Lord." The years had only confirmed his belief that Christ had met him that noon hour, had taken him, a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious, and had counted him faithful and appointed him to his service, giving him his commission as an apostle. "Howbeit, I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly." "His ignorance did not at all merit forgiveness, but it left the possibility of it" (Van Oosterzee). "Paul's is an instance of that form of ignorance which excuses acts done through it, i.e., ignorance of fact, not of moral principle" (J. R. Dummelow). "Sin is not an error of the understanding but of the will." Paul never minimized his guilt, but he counted his ignorance as something different from willful disobedience to known truth or duty.

> Paul meant well, but he was sadly mistaken. An automobile will go with equal speed in either direction according as the wheel is turned, but alas for its occupants and for the by-standers if it is turned in the wrong direction at a critical moment! Our actions which we think right may be far wrong, and may result in untold harm to others.

Paul makes it plain that it was God's grace that granted him both mercy and a commission, "the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly." In Romans 5.20, speaking of sin and grace generally, he says, "Where sin abounded, grace did abound much more exceedingly."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

"The conversion of Paul was a capital event in world history. The greatest event in the history of the human race was the birth of Jesus. The greatest event in the life of Jesus was his resurrection from the dead. After these two moments of primary importance in the history of the human race and of the Christian Church, the next most momentous occurrence in their history was the conversion of Paul. Jesus founded the faith, but Paul was to be the apostle of its universal conquest."

There is considerable difference of opinion concerning the dating of these events of early Acts. Ramsay dates the Crucifixion, 29 A.D., and Paul's conversion in early 33 A.D. We are probably justified in dating Stephen's martyrdom as late as 31 or 32, and from the day when Paul stood by and watched Stephen stoned events must have moved with confusing rapidity to that momentous hour on the road to Damascus.

Probably Paul took the shortest and most frequented route from Jerusalem to Damascus, which ran directly north to Shechen, and then inclined east and led around the Sea of Galilee and on to the latter city. The distance is one hundred and thirty miles "as the crow flies," a journey for Paul of six or eight days. Damascus, then and now the chief city of Syria, claims to be the oldest "living city" in the world. Other ancient cities of Biblical times, more important far than Damascus—Babylon and Nineveh, capitals of mighty empires—are now no more.

We first hear of Damascus in Abraham's time. It is watered by rivers famous in Scripture, the Barada (Abana) and Awaj (Pharpar), which Naaman thought better than all the waters of Israel. In the midst of the surrounding desert these rivers have made a rich plain celebrated for its gardens, orchards and fountains. The natives today call Damascus the "Silver Spoon," because of its shape and appearance in the midst of luxurious vegetation. So beautiful did Damascus seem to Mohammed that he said if he saw too much of it he should not wish for any second Paradise.

The street called Straight runs east and west through the entire city. In Paul's day it was a hundred feet wide and was divided by high Corinthian colonnades into three avenues, the central one for foot passengers, the others for chariots and horses. It is still the most important thoroughfare of the city,

but it makes several turns and is in part roofed over with glass and lined with shops, seemingly an endless arcade.

Tradition long located the scene of Paul's conversion six miles southwest of the city, but now a site more convenient for visitors is shown not far from a house on the city wall credited with being the one from which Paul escaped in a basket. Over the gateway of a house within the walls there is the inscription, "San Ananiæ Domus," House of Saint Ananias, and within its courtyard a subterranean grotto, used by the Franciscans as a chapel, has pictures representing Paul's vision and baptism.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

This lesson affords unusual opportunity to divest the fact of conversion of many of the untrue and harmful ideas which have grown upon it like barnacles. Help your class to see that conversion is both instantaneous and continuous, both external and internal, both Divine and human. See articles on conversion in Bible Dictionaries. Aim to make the lesson period an hour on the Damascus Road for every member of your class—for those not converted, an hour of conversion—for those already Christians, an hour of deeper conversion. Make plain that conversion involves commission, that vision means vocation, that the mountaintop experience leads to the valley ministry.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

PAUL'S CONVERSION AND COMMISSION

Beginning the Lesson. When Huss was bound to the stake a peasant woman came up with a faggot and begged that it be flung close to the victim that it might help to consume him. "Have I ever harmed you and yours that you are so bitter against me?" asked Huss. "Never," was the reply, "but you are a heretic. Wood is scarce this year, and the winter, they say, is like to be a hard one. I can ill afford the faggot, but I would fain do God service by helping rid the earth of an accursed heretic, and, therefore, I make the sacrifice."

"Oh holy simplicity!" exclaimed the martyr. And then he reached out his hand and drew the faggot toward him, saying, "Perhaps this faggot may help to save us both." Her zeal for God, if enlightened, Huss saw would have made of her a martyr instead of a persecutor.

The old peasant woman had the zeal for God which Paul the persecutor possessed, and her reason for her attitude was the same as his, she "held it ignorantly in unbelief."

A Right-about-Face. Paul met Jesus on the Damascus road at the end of a sequence of unusually disturbing psychic experiences. These are given in their order: the haunting personality of Jesus; the controversy with Stephen; the death of Stephen; the spiritual beauty of those whom he persecuted, imprisoned, and heckled to their death; the growing conflict in himself between the innate mystic and poet and the ornate theologian and rabbi; the sudden upheaval of the former and the consequent overthrow of the latter with a flash of cosmic illumination that revealed to him the glory of Jesus—triumphant over death, claiming him with tenderness and power—so that he literally fell to the ground in a convulsion of blinding tears. They were tears of sorrow for the one sin of hatred—the one sin Jesus will not condone. The conversion of Paul was a right-about-face from hate to love.—Robert Norwood.

Tolstoy's Experience. Five years ago I came to believe in Christ's teaching, and my life suddenly became changed: I ceased desiring what I had wished before, and began to desire what I had not wished before. What formerly had seemed good to me appeared bad, and what had seemed bad appeared good. . . . The direction of my life, my desires became different; what was good and bad changed places.

Christian Conversion is Moral Transformation. By conversion teachers of all religious schools have meant the change wrought in a human life by the Divine Spirit in response to the surrender of the individual will. The differences between varying phrasings of the doctrine have come out of varying degrees of emphasis on the divine or the human factor. A believer with a marked leaning toward the old Calvinism is likely to conceive of conversion as

so exclusively the work of God that the soul seems seized and carried into the Kingdom of God almost without its own consent. At the other extreme are those who think of conversion as simply a resolution on a man's part to be better. Between these contrasting views is the conception of the main mass of Christian believers who think of the conversion of a life as a change resulting from the interworking of the human and the divine will. A man is going in the wrong direction. He faces about and the divine forces help him to travel aright. Or a man is fettered by evil habits and determines to break from them, depending upon prayer and devotion to a religious ideal. Or a life has been weakened by sin; the sinner abandons his sin, looking to the healing influences of the Divine Presence.

We are not to import mysteries into spiritual birth by selecting the startling incidents as especial indications of the Divine Presence. The religious experiences of believers in non-Christian systems are just as spectacular as anything which could be found in a most careful search of the records of highly emotional revival services in Christian communities. The whirling dervish, the Hindu devotee, the American Indian youth inducted into the religious rites of his tribe, all experience religious excitement hardly intelligible to a Western mind; and yet we do not think of these experiences as more divine than the quiet self-surrender which marks the least demonstrative Christian. All these experiences are subject to psychological law. The problem in Christian life is to bring the psychological movement under moral law, to make the emotional reaction come out of moral purpose and lead to the moral control of the will. The Mohammedan, the Hindu, and the Indian youth, as well as the professedly Christian believer who puts the emphasis wholly on emotionalism, may come out of the trance, or the ecstasy, with no especially marked transformation except the loosening of the nervous forces. No significant moral result may follow. Christian conversion is moral transformation. A religion without emotion would be a highly questionable affair; our lives are so made that moral determination should produce its legitimate reaction in the sensibility. But there are higher forms of sensibility and lower. By some forms of stimuli the lower nervous centers can be thrown into furious uproar. Such tumult is vastly different from the peace of mind which comes with the faculties of the life set on doing the moral will of God.—Francis J. McConnell, in the Constructive Quarterly.

A Christian Youth Trying to Be Converted. In a very helpful book entitled What and Where Is God, the author, Richard La Rue Swain, strikingly recounts his efforts to become converted after the manner expected thirty years ago in a small, untutored community.

As a child, he says, religion was as real to him as his parents, or the atmosphere he breathed, or the food he ate. He had always been a Christian, but the conviction grew upon him that he must get "old people's religion," or be lost. The crisis came at the age of fifteen when a revival was being held at the school house. Quickly within himself he made the momentous decision, and surrendered himself unconditionally to the will of God. Peace failed to come, because he believed that he must experience the miracle of regeneration at the "mourners' bench."

So he went forward, although the knowledge that he was observed by mocking eyes hurt like the thongs of a whip on a bare back. He tried to feel sorry for his sins; and not succeeding in that, tried to feel sorry because he was not sorry.

The Conversion of a Wicked Man. John Masefield's widely read poem: "The Everlasting Mercy," is a poet's study in the fact of conversion. He presents the problem to us in the history of Saul Kane, a village wastrel, a drunkard, poacher, prize-fighter, and libertine. An eminent psychologist has divided souls into two classes: "the souls that are tough, and the souls that are tender." All students of life would place Saul Kane among the tough souls and give him a distinguished place in that category. What can be done with such a man? Is there any remedy which civilization possesses for such a social malady? The answer of Masefield is, that there is power in the grace of God to change that life in a moment of wonder. The faith which the poet expresses must be the unquestioned faith of the Church of Christ. There is no hopeless or irrecoverable human life, desperate though its condition may appear. The

deepest, truest thing about the worst man is that he has been made in the image of God, and that, though it may be scarred and defaced, the Divine impression can never be destroyed. In his lowest degradation he is different from the brute to whose level he seems to descend. His life there is an unnatural life. The conversion of such a man is actually a return to himself.

The conversion of Saul Kane began when he was in the ring, about to commence a prize-fight with a fellow poacher, surrounded by:

"The five and forty human faces
Inflamed by drink and going to races."

From the outset he has had a feeling of remorse, but he puts the thought away. After the fight he and his associates resort to the village inn, where the night is spent in bestial drinking and revelry. And there, while his companions lie about him in drunken stupor, we have indication that the mind of Saul Kane is being moved upon by the Divine Soul-winner,

"I opened window wide and leaned
Out of that pigsty of the fiend,
And felt a cool wind go like grace
About the sleeping market-place.
The clock struck three, and sweetly, slowly,
The bells chimed Holy, Holy, Holy;
And in a second's pause there fell
The cold note of the chapel bell.
And then a cock flew, flapping wings,
And summat made me think of things."

It was all a mad, disgusting game in which he was inextricably mixed up, but there is no hope of change or escape now:

"For parson chaps are mad supposin'
A chap can change the road he's chosen,"

and at that hopelessness the devil's voice came counseling suicide. In the recoil from the man he has been, Saul Kane acts like one beside himself, rushing out into the dark. He raves aloud of hell and destruction, and turns the quiet English country town into a pandemonium.

It was a word spoken by a woman, in the public house where Saul Kane was drinking that night, which the Holy Spirit used to lead this man to affirm, "Jesus is Lord."

"Miss Bowne, the Friend, went round at ten
To all the pubs in all the place,
To bring the drunkard's souls to grace."

To Saul Kane she spoke:

"Saul Kane," she said, "when next you drink
Do me the gentleness to think
That every drop of the drink accursed
Makes Christ within you die of thirst,
That every dirty word you say
Is one more flint upon his way,
Another thorn about his head,
Another mock by where he tread,
Another nail, another cross,
All that you are is that Christ's loss."

There and then Christ entered to give this man a new birth. We look at the taproom of a public house, and we see Saul Kane confronted by "The Friend," and we ask "How can these things be?" But there is wind blowing; a wind entering the heart emptied now of pride and self-sufficiency; a wind rushing in to fill the vacant place; the searching, cleansing, healing breath of God. "So is every one that is born of the Spirit."—Condensed from Spiritual Voices in Modern Literature, by Trevor H. Davies.

The Conversion of an Unreligious Man. A young English physician, utterly unspiritual, happens into an auditorium in which an American evangelist is conducting a service. Nothing the evangelist says, nothing the great choir sings, impresses him, but the manner in which the evangelist conducts the service, prompt, businesslike, shrewd and sane, leads him to review the mental

process by which he has hitherto evaded the religious appeal. The young man had not been irreligious, but unreligious. He goes away from this service to assume henceforth a new attitude, not alone toward religion, but toward the world at large. The center of life has shifted. Presently we find him a volunteer surgeon on a hospital ship among the neglected fishermen of the North Sea, and a little later, apostle, messenger, and "angel" to the Labrador coast. —Charles Carroll Albertson, in The Distinctive Ideas of Jesus.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. What is conversion? How does a child's conversion differ from an adult's? How do adult conversions differ and why? Should the church school observe special decision days?

2. Ministers need the help of personal workers. The work which an Ananias can do in the church today.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why should we deal leniently with one overtaken in sudden sin? 2. How did Peter learn this? 3. What is the force of the last part of verse 1? 4. What is the connection between verses 2 and 3? 5. Whom did Jesus accuse of thinking themselves to be something? 6. What does verse 4 mean? 7. What is the law of harvest? 8. What happens when men get drunk? 9. What evils may be charged to alcohol?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

A VISION AND A RESPONSE

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with Explanations and Comments.

The Life Story of Paul.

He found life a pattern
Woven by the Law
And men colorless threads in the fabric;
Save one,
Whose face shone
While jagged stones carried the last darkness,
And another,
Whose light and voice
Illumined a desert road.
Thereafter,
Frail but unafraid,
He journeyed into the dawn—
Tearing the pattern to shreds
To free souls
From the tyranny of the dark.—Earl B. Marlatt.

Paul's Preparation for the Voice on the Damascus Road. In one of the chapters of The Ideal Life, Henry Drummond uses his imagination in a way that easily carries his reader's conviction with him, as he ponders the manner in which Paul may have been prepared for the startling vision that so suddenly wrought his conversion.

He imagines that it had been a long time since Paul had had a chance to think, but now the time for reflection had come. And he was too great a man to think well of his life when he did think. As he lay down at night in the quiet wilderness his thoughts must often have turned on the true quality of the life to which he was sacrificing his talents and his youth. He felt that his life was miserably small. He had really nothing to show for his life. "After all," perhaps he cried, "to me to live is Paul, to me to live is Paul." His conversion was then begun. There was no retreat for a man like him.

His first achievement was only to discover himself. His second was to discover some one better than himself. He wanted a new center to his life—where was he to find it? His way led through the Holy Land. Perhaps kind words spoken by Christ were repeated to him by the peasants and to him the tender deeds which Christ wrought were recounted. Perhaps in passing through Samaria, he met a woman at a well who told a strange tale for the thousandth time, of a weary Man who had sat there and said he was the Christ. Galilee and Capernaum and the lake shore were full of memories of the one true life. And no doubt the Spirit's silent working had been telling on his mind during all those quiet days, leading up his thoughts to the revelation that was to come; when he deliberately removed the old center from his

life, and put a new one in its place. Instead of "to me to live is Paul," it became, "to me to live is Christ."

Paul's Response to the Vision. When Paul said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" he gave into the hands of Christ the steering wheel and the engine control and stood by to obey orders. He made Christ Master of the ship. He hailed Christ Lord of the whole personality. His thinking was to be guided by Christ, for in Christ he recognized the truth. His ambition was to be directed by Christ, for in Christ he had found life's glorious objective. He would take up whatever work Christ bade him do. He was ready to scrap all the old life-work and friendships, career and habits, in order that Christ might reconstruct his life from its foundations. Everything was flung into the melting pot to be run into the molds and reshaped by Christ.—W. Mackintosh Mackay.

Different Ways of Entering the Kingdom. Last week we studied the account of the Ethiopian's conversion (to use the word by which we are accustomed to express the change when one accepts Jesus as the Christ and dedicates himself to the service of God). How did he meet and answer the question, "Who art thou, Lord?" How did he confess that he believed Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God? How did he afterwards prove the reality of his conversion, as tradition tells us?

What a contrast between the conversion of the Ethiopian and Paul's conversion. Paul's conviction that Jesus was an impostor was suddenly changed to a conviction that he is the Messiah, his hatred of him was instantly turned into love for him, his desire to persecute his followers became a desire to become himself a follower of the lowly Nazarene. His whole course was arrested and revolutionized in a moment.

John and Matthew became Christians in an entirely different way from Paul. Each one comes to Christ in his own way, and the great question is not how he comes, but does he come. "The astronomers give us the exact moment when night becomes day, and winter changes to spring; but to our observation few can tell when the day actually begins, and none the moment when spring has arrived. But the day and spring actually come. The New Jerusalem has twelve gates, and people can come into it from every direction, and in many ways. They may ride or walk, they may go swiftly, or slowly. The one question is whether they enter at all."

"Some people are converted like the flashing of a meteor; with others it is like the rising of the morning sun, and you cannot tell the minute it was light," said a great revivalist, Dwight L. Moody. There are some who have had an overwhelming sense of their sin and a sudden definite assurance of their forgiveness; there are others who have been led to God by a gradual appreciation of his goodness and cannot tell when first they knew and served him.

Is it necessary for all children to be converted? "It is a true child," Phillips Brooks answers, "who loves God and sees everything beautiful in him, who loves the Church and finds its ways and forms full of significance and pleasure, and who hears and accepts as part of the story of the world which he is gradually learning to know, the story of how God loved the world so that he came into it and lived here and died here, to help every man to live in holiness and to save every man when he falls into sin. There is no child for whom that religion is impossible. Such a child is even now 'a member of Christ, a child of God, an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.'"

Sentence Sermons. The appeal of conscience is not less the voice of God than the expostulation at the gates of Damascus.—W. L. Watkinson.

Though heralded with naught of fear
  Of outward sign or show;
Though only to the inward ear
  It whispers soft and low,
Though dropping, as the manna fell,
  Unseen, yet from above,
Noiselessly as dewfall, heed it well,—
  Thy father's call of love.—Whittier.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Explain the Golden Text. 2. Commit to memory the Golden Text. 3. How does this law work with the drunkard? 4. What are the evil effects of alcohol? 5. What is your purpose regarding alcohol as a beverage?

LESSON VII—AUGUST 16

SOWING AND REAPING (Temperance Lesson)

GOLDEN TEXT: Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. Galatians 6.7

LESSON Galatians 6.1-10 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 5.11-15

GALATIANS 6.1 Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted. 2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. 3 For if a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. 4 But let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone, and not of his neighbor. 5 For each man shall bear his own burden.

6 But let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. 7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life. 9 And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. 10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. Deal gently with Another's Trespass, verse 1. "Brethren," wrote Paul to the Galatians, "if a man be caught in a sin, do you who profess the spirit of Christ set him right," correct him, and bring him back to right actions. The Greek verb means bring the man into his place: it is a metaphor taken from a dislocated limb brought back by a skillful surgeon into its true position.

> "We are to be experts in re-setting broken wills, and in repairing broken consciences, and in mending broken hearts. And there is far more work than we have doctors, and so the fallen are becoming the hopeless and the dying."

Restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness, for the man who has suddenly fallen into sin is not a hardened sinner, and should be dealt with leniently, and remember that under similar temptation you also might yield and need a similar forgiveness.

> "There is no sin which any man hath done, but another man may do the same" (Augustine).

II. Share Another's Burdens, verse 2. Bear ye one another's burdens. Another's weakness, his yielding to sudden temptation, his sorrow and remorse, may be his burden. Sympathetically share his cares and sorrows. By obeying this exhortation you will be fulfilling the law of Christ, for Christ's law is love: see Mt. 8.17.

> "No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of it for any one else" (Dickens).

III. Avoid Self-deception, verse 3. The connection of this verse with the preceding one is evidently that one who refuses to bear another's burden does so from a mistaken pride, from a false idea that he is somebody too exalted to stoop to another's burden. Yet in the sight of God he is only as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal, he deceiveth himself.

> "Few things are so stumbling as our conceit of ourselves" (Henry Churchill King).

IV. Do not Test Your Conduct by that of Others, verse 4. Let each man test his own conduct by the example of Christ, and then, if he stands the test, he may rejoice because of his own merit and not because he is better than his neighbor. He should not take others as a standard, and rejoice because he is better than some weaker or worse man. Recall the Pharisee's boast, "Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men," and compare with it Paul's glorying, "By the grace of God I am what I am."

V. Bear your Own Burden, verse 5. For each man shall bear his own burden, or load (Revised Version margin). The connection here with the preceding verse is that each man is held responsible for his own actions, irrespective of what his neighbor's may be; he must render an account of himself to God. In the Greek there is no seeming contradiction between this and verse two, as in the English, for two different words are used for our word burden. In verse two it means pressure, fatigue, all that is burdensome, tires or gives trouble, hence especially griefs, misery. A man was journeying from Jerusalem to Jericho, brigands attacked him, and left him half-dead by the roadside. The Good Samaritan came along, burdened himself with him, brought him to the inn, and saw that he was well cared for. Was it not the Samaritan's duty to help that man bear his burden of trouble? In verse five the Greek word means a load, as a ship's cargo, a soldier's pack. Two men are traveling along with burdens on their backs. One of them declares his burden greater than he can bear, and throws it down. His companion, who is no stronger than he, adds it to his own, and they trudge on. What think you of that first man; should he not have borne his own burden? Every one has his own rightful load, responsibility, accountability, which it is his duty to carry; he has no right to let others carry it for him.

A Burden-Bearer of Cyprus

"The ingenuity of the ignoble in making themselves comfortable at other people's expense is no small part of the comedy and tragedy of human life" (W. L. Watkinson).

VI. Share with your Teachers, verse 6. Let him that is taught in the Word communicate, share, with the teacher, contribute to his support in all good things, money, food, clothing, etc. Moffatt's translation reads: Those who are taught must share all the blessings of life with those who teach them the Word. Probably Paul has heard that some Christians in the churches of Galatia listened to the preaching of the Word but failed to help support the preacher.

VII. The Law of Harvest, verses 7, 8. Be not deceived, God is not mocked, as they seem to think they can mock him who expect to escape the consequences of their actions. "God cannot be treated with contempt without provoking his righteous punishment" (Philip Schaff). For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. This is God's law of the spiritual harvest.

"Wild oats take something out of the soil of a man's life that no system of crop rotation can restore" (The Youth's Companion).

We usually think of this verse as referring to retribution for wrong-doing, but the happier meaning is equally true that "he who sows wheat reaps wheat, not tares."

"Life's fields will yield—as we make it—
A harvest of thorns or of flowers" (Alice Cary).

Verse eight is a particular example coming under the general truth expressed in the preceding verse. The "flesh" is here thought of as the evil nature: "He that tills the field of the carnal life," shall reap a harvest doomed to perish, but he who tills the field of the spiritual life shall reap eternal life. "The heart

sows into the Spirit whenever in thought or deed his prompting is obeyed and his will made the law of life" (G. S. Findlay).

VIII. Let us not Weary in Well-doing, for if we Persevere our Reward is Sure, verse 9. Are these reasons for wearying in well-doing for others: one's efforts are not always appreciated; one's deeds are often criticized; the work requires sacrifice and the visible reward is slight?

> "Folks that get weary in well-doing generally haven't done much at it, when you come to hunt up their records. The weariness is usually at the beginning, and sorts out the workers from the quitters."

IX. Let us Do Good, verse 10. So then—since our reward is sure—as we have opportunity let us do good to all men and especially to the followers of Christ whose faith makes them one household or family.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

If a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness, verse 1. With regard to the treatment of penitents, two opposite opinions, the one of justice, the other of mercy, divided the primitive church. The more rigid and inflexible casuists refused them forever, and without exception, the meanest place in the holy community, which they had disgraced or deserted, and leaving them to the remorse of a guilty conscience, indulged them only with a faint ray of hope that the contrition of their life and death might possibly be accepted by the Supreme Being.—From Gibbon's Decline and Fall of Rome.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Our temperance lesson is taken from the Epistle to the Galatians, written by Paul to the churches which he founded in Galatia, a district in the interior of Asia Minor. It is one of his earliest written of our New Testament books.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

There is great need of scientific temperance education in church schools. There is a helpful pamphlet along this line written by Dr. Ernest Thomas and entitled Alcohol and Life. "Not by compulsion, nor by undue persuasion, but by reasoned presentation of facts and of Christian ideals of life," the writer invites his readers "to the way which this pamphlet seeks to promote." It is issued by the Board of Evangelism and Social Service of The United Church of Canada, and is on sale at the Wesley Buildings, Toronto, for fifteen cents per copy, plus postage.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

SOWING AND REAPING (EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL)

Beginning the Lesson. Let us briefly discuss, verse by verse, this interesting passage from Paul's letter to the Galatians, and then hasten to our temperance topic, The Effect of Alcohol, which is based upon the seventh verse. (Explanations and Comments.)

Two Different Harvests in Russia. Some years ago Russia passed a law that the eagle which was in use above saloons should come down and its place be taken by a skull and cross-bones. The authorities of Russia were then realizing what was the terrible harvest of that crop. One of its writers, Ivan Rodiniow, declared: "We are a poor, miserable, beggared people. Most of the children are kept from school because we have no longer money to build schools and pay teachers. But we have saloons, public and private, in every corner of the Holy Empire. The crowd presses into the drink shop, poisons itself with this devil's potion, and winds up in the police court—health and sense gone. We Russians must be for all eternity a drunken, criminal people, a scandal to humanity, until the patience of the Creator comes to an end and he sweeps us away from the earth as disgracing the planet. Or

he will make us the slaves of a worthier and more temperate people." Other temperance workers published these appalling facts: Russia annually loses four million and a half children because of intemperate mothers; one million working men die annually from drink in public houses; hundreds of thousands of alcoholic sufferers fill the hospitals; eight hundred thousand criminals are in jails, chiefly due to drink!

Then came the day when the troops were mobilized for the great war. All over the Empire vodka shops were closed by special policemen, who locked up the supply of liquor and placed the imperial seal on the shops. (Vodka was the national alcoholic drink.) Not a drop of spirits reached the army. Step by step the prohibition extended to the use of lighter drinks. The saloons remained closed, and after six months of war Dr. Vesselitsky wrote: "Prohibition has completely transformed towns. All of a sudden drunkards and beggars disappeared from the streets; the penitentiary had no more prisoners and municipal judges very little work to do. In Petrograd the daily criminality dropped seventy per cent. The savings banks in all Russian cities and towns have never had such enormous deposits as since August, 1914." In that length of time the peasantry, it was reported, looked like a different race. The marks of suffering, the pinched look of illness and improper nourishment had gone from their faces, and they were neatly and better dressed. And notwithstanding the great percentage of laborers in the ranks of the army, it was pointed out that the efficiency of those remaining, owing to enforced sobriety, had increased from fifty to one hundred per cent. A Petrograd correspondent wrote: "Although I myself for more than thirty years have taken my 'glass' I cannot affirm that the deprivation has been hard. Nor do I notice any desire for 'the good old times.' One feels better in one's head, more elastic, and fitter for work. It is only the first step that seems hard. One has not the energy to break with the habit of years. But with the support of an autocrat's word it goes well."

Couture's Great Picture. Some of you have seen Couture's great picture, The Decadence of the Romans, in the gallery of the Luxembourg at Paris,—a picture of a luxurious hall where the frenzied orgy is at its height, a carnival of drunkenness and wantonness. A drunken youth, with a wreath in his hair, sits upon a pedestal; while a reeling boy proffers a goblet to the marble mouth of a statue. The old Roman dignity is gone from the brutalized faces of the revelers, which contrast sadly with the noble features of the statues of the old Roman worthies ranged round the hall, and with the sad faces of a group of thoughtful-looking men who are quitting the scene. And what is perhaps as significant as any other feature is, that the faces of this picture present a surprising likeness to the faces which one sees every day in Paris, and that the models for this wreck of human nature are furnished by the painter's own city. It is the story of the inevitable end of fast life and of fast society.—Marvin R. Vincent.

Alcohol Leads to Physical Bankruptcy. As a work-producer alcohol is exceedingly extravagant, and, like all other extravagant measures, leads to a physical bankruptcy. It is also curious that troops cannot work or march on alcohol. I was with the relief column that moved on to Ladysmith, and, of course, it was an extremely trying time by reason of the hot weather. In that enormous column of thirty thousand, the first who dropped out were not the tall men, or the short men, or the big men, or the little men—they were the drinkers, and they dropped out as clearly as if they had been labelled with a big letter on their backs.—Sir Frederick Treves.

The Effect in Ontario of Government Control of Liquor. In September, 1927, four months after the Ontario Temperance Law was repealed and the Government Control Act came into operation, a Canadian paper stated these effects:

"The first two months of Government Control registered an increase of twenty-five per cent in the cases of public drunkenness, an increase of forty-two per cent in the cases of disorderly conduct, an increase of twenty-five per cent in the cases of drunkenness while in charge of an automobile, an increase of forty-two per cent in the number of automobile accidents; more

drunkenness is seen on the streets, bootlegging has greatly increased."

A Canadian paper of current date has this editorial:—

"Ontario highways are among the finest in Canada, and her byways have long been considered trails of loveliness. Today the great roads and the little roads of Ontario are littered with empty bottles, whiskey and beer bottles by the hundred thousand. You can see empty bottles in hotel rooms and corridors, in office and garage, in barn and bin. The thing has become a danger and a nuisance. It has been going on for some time, getting steadily worse. At first we blamed it on the tourists, but we now know that the tourists couldn't account for one-twentieth part of the empties, even at the border. 'The King's Highway' is the grand old title Ontario's premier recently revived for the roads, and Ontario's government is making those highways a byword among the people and a danger to the traveling public, by its ever-increasing flow of liquor, under guise of government 'control.' So terrible is the truth in this matter that statistics dare not be published until after the forthcoming election. But the people of Ontario should know that their province is selling fifty million dollars' worth of liquor a year. Is it any wonder that tens of thousands of youth are being added annually to the list of drinkers? Is it strange that motor accidents are increasing at an appalling rate?"

Mark Hopkins' Students. Mark Hopkins was one of the most eminent and thoroughly successful teachers that this country has ever produced—so much so that President Garfield could suggest, as his idea of a college, Mark Hopkins at one end of a log and a student at the other end.

Every student who entered Williams College during my college life, whether for an advanced course or from another college, was obliged to subscribe to two pledges. The first, at the beginning of the second week after entrance, was as follows:

"I, A. B. ——, promise on my faith and honor that, during the term time, and while residing at college, I will neither drink any intoxicating drink nor have any agency in introducing it into college.

"If any student violates this pledge he will be dismissed from College."

The second pledge, called "The Matriculation," was subscribed to before the close of the first term, and not until then did the student become enrolled as a full member of the college. It read as follows:

"I, A. B. ——, on condition of being admitted a member of Williams College, promise on my faith and honor to observe all the laws and regulations of this college, particularly that I will faithfully avoid the use of profane language, gaming, and all disorderly behavior."

Were these pledges kept? I never knew of one instance, during my four years, of any student's breaking either the pledge concerning drink or gaming; I only once heard the use of profane language, and in one single instance, where a student was found guilty of an impure life, he was dismissed from college at the end of his first term.—William D. Porter.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. Up-to-date information as to the effects of alcohol.

2. Up-to-date information as to the progress of temperance.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the main outline of the first twelve chapters of The Acts? 2. In the Merchant of Venice, what does Shylock, the Jew, say to Bassanio, the Gentile, about eating with him? 3. Why was this a critical time in the history of the Church? 4. What verse is the heart of our text? 5. What instances of unchristian exclusiveness have you noted recently?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

SOWING AND REAPING (EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL)

Beginning the Lesson. What is our Golden Text? Where is it found? Who wrote this letter? To whom? What is our Intermediate and Senior topic today? In order to have time for this topic, let us limit ourselves to this one verse today. What does it mean? The prophet Hosea declares "They sow

the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind." What does he mean? His master bade Lukman, the fabulist, sow a field with barley but the slave sowed it with oats. When the harvest came and he was charged by his master with disobeying him, Lukman excused himself by saying that he expected barley would grow from the oats, just as his master was always sowing the seeds of sin and expecting to reap the rewards of virtue. The laws of the harvest are fixed in the moral as well as in the physical realm, and always and ever whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? asked Jesus. Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Sin and Punishment. You all of you know that sin and punishment stand connected. "Sin," as we say, "cannot go unpunished." But possibly you have not yet observed that there are in this world two quite different kinds of punishment. There are punishments which are natural, and there are punishments which are arbitrary. Let me explain what I mean. If a man gets drunk at night, the next morning, unless he is a confirmed toper, he wakes probably with a terrible headache, and altogether he feels himself miserable and disgraced. This is a natural punishment. It is a punishment which comes out of the cause. But supposing this same man, instead of safely reaching his home and fumbling his way into bed, is run in by a gentleman in blue, and locked up for the night in a prison cell. The next morning he has his headache, his natural punishment, but he has also something else; for by and by he is brought before the magistrate, and by him he is fined "five shillings and costs." This is an arbitrary punishment, a punishment inflicted by the will of the magistrate, at the direction of the law.

Now the punishments which God inflicts are natural punishments. They grow out of the wrong that men commit. As the plant grows out of the seed, as the man grows out of the child, so do the punishments which God imposes come out of the sins that men have done. This is what the apostle teaches: "Be not deceived," he says, "God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth that also shall he reap."—John Byles, in The Boy and the Angel.

What Alcohol Does. Alcohol has its uses. It has something to do with explosives and opiates and medicines. One therefore cannot say that it never does any good. But one can say that as a beverage it is always harmful.

It deceives. It is about the most deceptive thing there is. It looks innocent, but it is poison. It seems to put strength into one, but it takes strength from one. It seems to warm one, but it makes one colder. It seems to cheer one, but it makes one depressed. It seems to give power to think and speak, yet it really takes that power away. There is a spider which is so like a flower that butterflies take it for one and alighting on it are instantly devoured. Alcohol is as deceptive as that spider.

It deflects. You know what that means. You fling a dart at another and he lifts his shield, catches it, and turns it aside or deflects it. If you stood by a ship's compass and held a magnet against it, you would draw or deflect the needle away from the north and make it point in some other direction. That is what drink does. A young man was a leader in his college and on the straight road to honors and a high position, but he began to drink and that turned him aside into the path of failure and shame. Drink is a great deflector—it turns multitudes of people off the right path.

It disables. To disable a man's brain requires an illness or a sudden shock? Oh, no, it doesn't. To disable a man's body requires an accident, he must fall, or something must fall upon him? Oh, no. Both can be done quickly by drink. Excessive drinking makes it impossible for a man to think, or speak, or walk. It paralyzes brain and body. The drinker speedily becomes incapable for the tasks of life.

It disfigures. If you care for a good appearance you will have nothing to do with alcohol. Liquor can paint the face with blotches and the nose with red; it can take the light out of the eye and the nobleness out of the looks. One never saw a handsome drunkard. And even light drinkers look flushed and hot and excited. Drink changes the appearance, and it never changes it for the better.

It degrades. Your dictionary will tell you that degrade means to reduce, to lower, to wear down. Alcohol can reduce from wealth to poverty, from health to sickness, from happiness to misery. It lowers the drinker in his own eyes and in the eyes of others. It strips him of his good name, of goods, of will, of love, of hope. Alcohol wears one down. When you see rocks on the seashore cut into fantastic shapes you know it is due to the action of the waves. And when you see some bloated, blear-eyed, ragged man or woman you know it is due to the action of liquor. It wears them down to that degraded state. It destroys. Alcohol destroys character, happiness, brain, body, home, soul. There is no beautiful thing that it does not turn to dust and ashes. The destruction wrought by war is terrible, but war does stop sometime, and after awhile peace makes good its destruction of lands and cities. But in some places drink never stops and its destruction is always going on.

The church schools of Canada have a Purpose Card for the members to sign. Would it not be well for us to put our names to such a card, adding to it a third reason? Here it is:

Because God expects me to keep my body fit and pure and my mind clear and alert,

And

Because the use of alcohol is injurious to both body and mind,

And

Because the manufacture of alcoholic drinks is prohibited by a law of our country; therefore

I Purpose

To abstain from alcoholic liquors as a beverage and to encourage others to abstain.

Straight Traffic at the Next Corner. "Father," said Ernest, as he rode downtown in New Haven beside Dr. Benton in the automobile, "why are you always laying so much emphasis upon habits? I think you're asking me to take a pretty long look ahead. Shouldn't a fellow have a few years in which he can be care-free? It doesn't seem to me that a young fellow should take life as seriously as you are trying to make me take it. I want to have my four years in college care-free, without everlastingly thinking of consequences. If I need to, I can turn over a new leaf when I get through college."

As Ernest finished his protest they were just approaching the corner of Chapel and Church Streets. About twenty-five feet from the corner they passed a traffic signpost that read, "Straight Traffic at the Next Corner."

"What does that sign mean?" asked the doctor, for he was out of town and had not seen it before.

"It means," said his son, "that now you've passed that post you have to go straight ahead. You can't stop, and you can't turn."

"Well, I guess," said the doctor, as his machine shot out of the traffic into the open street ahead, "that's as good an illustration as I need. Ernest, I've been practicing medicine long enough to have seen a good many sides of life, and the more I see of it the more I'm convinced that it's pretty much like that traffic post—once you get beyond a certain point with some things there's no stopping. You simply have to go right through. The drink habit or the drug habit is an example. I don't suppose any one who started out with a friendly glass now and then thought he was going to end with delirium tremens. But before he knew it, he ran by the last point of recovery, just as I ran by that signpost, and after that it was 'straight traffic at the next corner' for him.

"You say you don't want to be everlastingly thinking of consequences while you're in college. Well, it's because I don't want you to have to think everlastingly about consequences after you get out of college that I am warning you to be careful now. The turning over a new leaf idea is a snare laid by the devil. What you've written by habit in your nervous system is written, and it's always there either as an ally or as an enemy. Don't run past the signposts, and then expect nature to reverse the traffic regulations for your benefit. Beyond a certain point it's 'straight traffic at the next corner' for us all."—**The Youth's Companion.**

A Gallon of Misery to a Half Pound of Comfort. "I cannot speak for temperance more effectually," said Booker Washington, "than to quote old Uncle Calhoun Webster. He said, 'When I sees a man a-goin' home wid a gallon o' whiskey and a half-pound o' meat, dat's temperance lecture enough for me—an' I sees it ebery day. An' I knows dat eberyt'ing in dat man's house am on de same scale—a gallon o' misery to ebery half-pound o' comfort.' "

How King Khama Dealt with the Purveyors of Alcohol. There is a story in the history of Christian missions in South Africa that has a different setting than most of the temperance stories of our own land. It is an account of the struggles of King Khama, a native chief of the Bamangwatos, a tribe of the Bechuanas. Khama grew up as a boy in his father's court, in the midst of the grossest savagery. His father was both chief and sorcerer. Theft, treachery, and murder were everyday occurrences. Witchcraft settled the affairs, both of the state and of the individual life. Before Khama came into his kingship he became a Christian, through personal contact with his loved friend, John Mackenzie, the missionary statesman of South Africa. He soon developed such forbearance, gentleness, patience, and dignity, and was so steadfast and statesmanlike in his dealings that he was known among all his white friends as the "Alfred the Great" of South Africa. Khama soon determined to put an end to native beer drinking, with all of its evils, and also determined to prohibit the white man's drink from the boundaries of his own state. The white traders and liquor dealers violated his laws, smuggled goods and defied the most strenuous legislation. Warning followed warning, still the law was violated. Finally, tried beyond further endurance, the king gave an ultimatum in a public speech to all the liquor dealers and traders in his domain. It is this speech that shows his strength of character and reveals a life of the finest temper.

"Take everything that you have. Take all that is yours and go. I am trying to lead my people to act according to that Word of God which we have received from you white people, and you show them an example of wickedness such as we never knew. You, the people of the Word of God! Go! Take your cattle and leave my town, and never come back again!"

On the ground of old friendship one dealer pleaded for pity. Khama flashed back: "Friendship! You know better than any one how I hate this drink. Don't talk to me about friendship. You are my worst enemy. I had a right to expect that you would uphold my laws, and you bring in the stuff for others to break them. You ask for pity, and you show me no pity. No; I have had enough of such pity. It is my duty to have pity on my people, over whom God has placed me, and I am going to show them pity today. That is my duty to God." And the drink went.

To the British Administration he wrote: "I dread the white man's drink more than the assegais of the Matabele, which kill men's bodies and is quickly over; but drink puts devils into men and destroys their souls and their bodies forever. Its wounds never heal. I pray your Honor never to ask me to open even a little door to the drink."—Missionary Comments.

Sentence Sermons. Drink is death's prime minister.—Joseph Addison.

A "well-preserved man" is never preserved in alcohol.—The Youth's Companion.

O what a generation that will be to which strong drink will be unknown; how healthy, how wealthy, how clear of intellect, how strong of arm, and how rich in hope!—F. W. Farrar.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How was Philip brought to the Ethiopian, and how was the Ethiopian prepared for his coming? 2. How was Ananias brought to Saul, and how was Saul prepared for his coming? 3. How was Peter brought to Cornelius, and how was Cornelius prepared for his coming? 4. What great lesson did Peter learn? 5. When a truth is learned, to what should it lead? 6. Where were the followers of Jesus bidden to carry the gospel? 7. Into what regions had it been carried up to this time? 8. Who was the first convert outside of Judaism to be baptized?

LESSON VIII—AUGUST 23

A GOSPEL FOR ALL MEN

GOLDEN TEXT: There is no distinction between Jew and Greek: for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him. Romans 10.12

LESSON Acts 10.1 to 11.18; 1 Corinthians 1.23-25
DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 11.1-5

ACTS 11.5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even unto me: 6 upon which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw the fourfooted beasts of the earth and wild beasts and creeping things and birds of the heaven. 7 And I heard also a voice saying unto me, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. 8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath ever entered into my mouth. 9 But a voice answered the second time out of heaven, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common. 10 And this was done thrice: and all were drawn up again into heaven. 11 And behold, forthwith three men stood before the house in which we were, having been sent from Cæsarea unto me. 12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, making no distinction. And these six brethren also accompanied me; and we entered into the man's house: 13 and he told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, Send to Joppa, and fetch Simon, whose surname is Peter; 14 who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house. 15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on us at the beginning. 16 And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit. 17 If then God gave unto them the like gift as "he did" also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could withstand God? 18 And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. Peter's Vision, his Preaching to and Baptism of Cornelius and Other Gentiles, Acts 10.

II. The Church at Jerusalem Disapproves of Peter's Deed, 11.1-4. The apostles and the brethren at Jerusalem heard that Peter had preached to Gentiles in Cæsarea, and on his return to Jerusalem they rebuked him, not for the preaching, but for having gone into the house of Gentiles and eaten with them—the scandal of it! "You went in to men uncircumcised and ate with them!" they exclaimed in horror. Up to this time Peter's authority had been unquestioned. It must have cut him to the quick to have his actions challenged. He did not quail, but justified his conduct, explaining the occurrences to them just as they had happened.

III. Peter's Account of his Vision and its Lesson, 11.5-10. Webster defines the trance as "a state in which the soul seems to have passed out of the body into another state of being, or to be wrapped in visions; an ecstasy." It was while Peter was praying in the city of Joppa that he fell into a trance and had a vision by which God taught him a great truth.

> The Lick Observatory is not built on the coast where fogs and mists at times obscure the heavens, but above all such obstructions, on top of mount Hamilton, where the air is clear. The vision of truth and duty does not come to the one who dwells always on the level where one's right is limited to self and self's interests, with their obstructing mists, but it comes to the one who mounts to the heights where communion with God may be had and messages from God received.

In his vision Peter saw a receptacle somewhat resembling a great sheet held up by the four corners, which was let down from heaven toward him. "The vision was evidently in its form and in its direction the result of previous natural circumstances. The death of Stephen must have had its effect on the apostle's mind. That truth for which he died, the transient character of Judaism, must have suggested strange new thoughts to be pondered on and

doubted. Besides this, the apostle was in a state of hunger. In ecstasy, or trance, or vision, things meet for food presented themselves to his mental eye. Evidently the form in which this took place was shaped by his physical cravings, the direction depended partly on his previous thoughts concerning the opening question of the church. But the eternal truth, the spiritual verity conveyed by the vision, was clearly of a higher source. Here are the limits of the natural and the supernatural closely bordering on each other" (F. W. Robertson).

In the receptacle Peter saw all manner of beasts and creeping things and birds, and he heard a voice bidding him rise, kill and eat. ("In the East the flesh-meat, which is never hung for days, like ours, is put in a great iron cooking-pot whilst the carcass is still warm, as indicated in this command.")

A Voice spoke a second time out of heaven, and the message was: "What God hath cleansed, make not thou common." The vision might have been taken simply to mean that the Mosaic regulations as to meats were to be abolished in order that Jews and Gentiles might associate and eat together; but it had a deeper and wider significance—that no human creature was to be regarded as common or unclean, for God is no respecter of persons, 10.34. And this was done thrice: and all were drawn up again into heaven.

> "Strangely enough, the problem of the Jew today is not his prejudice against the rest of the world. It is the rest of the world's prejudice against him. The bigotry of men who call themselves Christians in dealing with Jews is one of the sad, dark pages of the human story. Many Christians today need to see the vision of the descending sheet and to give to modern Jews the benefit of Peter's great announcement of democracy, 'God is no rspecter of persons.'"

IV. Peter's Account of his Putting the Vision into Practice, 11.11, 12. Just at this juncture three men stood before the house and the Spirit bade Peter go with them.

> "One of the great secrets of spiritual progress is to discern what the Holy Spirit's errand is for us in the immediate task. We must submit the present moment to his counsels. We must not dwell in some remote morrow and overlook the privilege that is near. As God gives us daily bread he also confers upon us a daily mission" (J. H. Jowett).

With wise forethought unexpected in Peter, he took with him six Jewish believers as witnesses, and on reaching Cæsarea, entered into the man's house. The man was Cornelius, an army officer of the rank of centurion (captain), a Gentile. Fully grasping all the implications of the vision just vouchsafed to him, Peter realized the occasion for his summons.

> "Great thoughts are in the air for those who are open-minded; noble impulses crowd the highway for those who are ready to receive and act upon them" (H. W. Mabie).

V. Peter's Account of his Reception, 11.13, 14. Cornelius explained to Peter how he, a proud Roman, had sent for a Jew to enlighten him. An angel had come to him and bade him send to Joppa for Peter, who would tell him how he and all his house might be saved. Cornelius was a God-fearing proselyte who observed the Jewish hours of prayer and whose prayers and alms were acceptable to God, 10.1-4. He was living in the best way he knew; he was not far from the kingdom.

> "God's angels wait for an open door. They find it when the soul becomes devout, the life charitable, and the spirit prayerful" (Samuel King).

"Thou hast well done that thou art come," Cornelius added. "Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord," 10.33.

VI. The Holy Spirit Given to the Gentiles and They Are Baptized, verses 15-17. Peter preached unto them Jesus (read 10.34-43), and God's approval marked his words: "The Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on us at the beginning" [at Pentecost].

"We have here the all-sufficient warrant for Christian missions, and the adequate principle of Christian unity. Where Christ is known and loved, he brings a new Spirit before which racial barriers and animosities disappear; and where the Spirit is, should not the frank acknowledgment of oneness in fellowship be given?" (R. H. Coats).

Recalling the words of Jesus about being baptized in the Holy Spirit, Peter was convinced that God had set his seal upon the Gentiles: it was his Lord's will that they should be baptized and thus admitted into the fellowship of Jewish believers. He would have been fighting against God had he yielded to his natural impulse of prejudice and refused them this right. "Who was I, that I could withstand God?" he exclaimed to his accusers.

VII. The Inescapable Conclusion, 11.18. The facts of this epoch-making incident had been told. There was only one conclusion which the Church at Jerusalem could draw, and glorifying God they cried, "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life." All doors into the house of salvation were flung wide open.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

I was in the city of Joppa praying, verse 5. On the housetop, 10.9. The roof of the house was flat. Around it was a balustrade as ordered in Dt. 22.8, from three to four feet high. Many were the activities carried on upon the housetop: there corn was dried, linen was hung up, exercise was taken, booths were erected during the Feast of Tabernacles, and there in hot weather sleep was sought. It was especially the place for prayer and meditation, at evening and in the morning and at noontide.

House in Palestine with Chamber on the Roof

Nothing common or unclean hath ever entered into my mouth, verse 8. Some of the animals seen in the vision were regarded by Jews as unclean, unfit for eating, and others as clean, fit for eating, but the clean by contact with the unclean had become themselves unclean, according to the Jewish belief. Levitical law prescribed what animals could be slaughtered for food, and prescribed also the method of slaughter. How strong this ingrained Jewish prejudice against eating food Levitically unclean is, is shown by the admission of a prominent rabbi of today, who has been an active Christian for forty years, that he has never brought himself to touch such food, although he knew he had no reason for not eating it.

"Jewish food lay between what was prohibited as unclean, such as the flesh of the pig, and what was sacred because of its use in sacrifice, such as the fat of kidneys," Dr. G. M. Mackie writes. "These restrictions as to food are the chief subject of synagogue literature and the bulwark of Jewish nationality. A modern application of legal whimsicality is that a cup of tea containing both sugar and milk is unclean. The bullock's blood used in the purification of the sugar might have been that of the calf belonging to the cow that gave the milk, and this would come under the transgression of boiling a kid in its mother's milk" (Ex. 34.26).

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

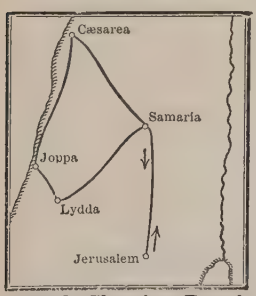
Should a Gentile be baptized? Should a Gentile be admitted to all the privileges of the Jews? Should the Roman world have the gospel preached to it? These were crucial questions which had to be settled by Peter and the other apostles. The gospel had been given to the hated Samaritans, but they had Jewish blood in their veins and they kept the commands of Moses. Philip had taught and baptized the Ethiopian, but Philip was not one of the apostles and his was only a special case.

Jaffa Seen from the Sea

The Church at Jerusalem was still essentially Jewish, but a new era was dawning. A series of events was about to change the narrow, Jewish-Christian religion into the universal Christian religion. The way in which the truth was brought home to Peter and through him to the others in Jerusalem is the subject of our lesson.

Joppa (modern Jaffa) was the seaport of Jerusalem, thirty miles away, with which it is now connected by a railway. Joppa means Beautiful, and it is indeed most attractive to travelers who approach it from the sea. Its white, flat-roofed houses climb the terraced side of the hill and are imbedded in orange and lemon and palm trees.

"Joppa was Jewish as no other town on the coast," declares Dr. George Adam Smith. "Though Joppa was tributary to Herod, he never resided there, or tried to rebuild it, or plant heathen features upon it. Alone of the chief cities of the region it had no Greek or Latin name attached to it. In close commerce with Jerusalem, it was infected with the fanatic patriotism of the latter. To Jewish Joppa Jewish Peter came; and we can understand that, as he moved about its narrow lanes leading to the sea, where his scrupulous countrymen were jostled by foreign sailors and foreign wares, he grew more concerned than ever about the ceremonial law."



Sketch Showing Peter's Journeys

Cæsarea, where Cornelius lived, must not be confounded with Cæsarea Philippi near where Peter had made his great acknowledgment that Jesus is the Christ. The Cæsarea of our lesson was built by Herod the Great on the site of a small village upon the Mediterranean shore thirty miles north of Joppa. He named the city Cæsarea Augusta in honor of the Emperor, Augustus Cæsar. It was made the capital of the Roman province of Judea, and here the governor, or procurator as he was called, resided, and the Roman troops had their headquarters. A military road connected it with Jerusalem seventy miles away.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

"What is the use of studying lessons like this if prejudices and discriminations continue to have place in our lives?" a writer questions. "Here we are in America faced with the most desperate problems over differences of race, environment, and color. Nor is the difference one simply of race and color; these differences are simply a part of the spirit of exclusiveness and prejudice that seems to run riot in life. Can one doubt that Christian virtue is by no means limited to those of a particular group? All around us today we have the evidence that God is no respecter of persons. He reveals his truth in all fullness to people of all shades, conditions, and types."

The seeing of an abstract truth is only half; if the complementary half be not joined with it, it becomes even less than half. The true sequence is—ideal, impulse, action. Unless we try to carry out high ideals they do not make us better men and women.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE GOSPEL FOR ALL MEN

Beginning the Lesson. In Jewish quarters upon door or window of a restaurant may be seen the word "Kosher" in English or Hebrew letters. It means that all the food served there has been prepared according to the strict requirements of the ancient Jewish laws.

How difficult it is for a Jew who no longer believes it necessary to eat only meat thus prepared or to abstain from the flesh of the pig, to eat all food is vividly portrayed by Mary Antin in The Promised Land. In describing a dinner among Gentiles, she writes:

"All went well until a platter was passed with a kind of meat that was strange to me. Some mischievous instinct told me that it was ham—forbidden food; and I, the liberal, the free, was afraid to touch it! I had a terrible moment of surprise, mortification, self-contempt; but I helped myself to a slice of ham, nevertheless, and hung my head over my plate to hide my confusion. I was furious with myself for my weakness. I to be afraid of a pink piece of pig's flesh! And I began to reduce my ham to invisible atoms, determined to eat more of it than anybody at the table.

"Alas! I learned that to eat in defense of principles was not so easy as to talk. I ate, but only a newly abnegated Jew can understand with what squirming, what protesting of the inner man, what exquisite abhorrence of myself. That Spartan boy who allowed the stolen fox, hidden in his bosom, to consume his vitals rather than to be detected in the theft, showed no such miracle of self-control as did I, sitting there at my friend's tea-table, eating unJewish meat."

It was equally difficult for Peter as "a newly abnegated Jew" to practice his belief that not only all foods were alike "clean" and wholesome, but that all peoples, Gentiles and Jews, were alike in God's sight and therefore in his own. He learned that lesson at Joppa and Cæsarea.

"The Never Have Club." When, by a marvelous vision of the plan of redemption that was to include the whole word, Peter was shown his task, he offered as an excuse for deep-seated racial prejudice that he never had done such a thing before. That time-worn, battered excuse has been presented from that hour to this.

"I never have been interested in foreign missions." Thousands are the victims of this prejudice, who yet strangely enough call themselves the disciples of Christ.

"I never have taken any part in the prayer-meeting." So she thought the social weekly gathering dull, was easily persuaded not to attend it, and had an unerring gift of criticism for those who did.

The members of the "Never Have Club" are many. Peter thought better of it, and said, wisely, "Who was I, that I could withstand God?" Is it not precisely what we need to see, that, instead of fancying we have said the last word with "I never have," we are being disobedient to a world vision, when, bidden to any service needful to humanity, we offer so flimsy an excuse?

The effective work of the world might easily be doubled if the "Never Haves" would only change their motto to "I always do."—Condensed from Zion's Herald.

In the Process of Transformation. Were it not for this vision, Peter would have stopped growing. He was intense but narrow, energetic but circumscribed, devout but parochial. He liked preaching, and addressed his congregations as men and brethren, but the emphasis was on the "brethren" and not on the "men." He hungered to see lives changed, but he was very particular in his congregation. His taste in souls was fastidious. He wanted to see his Lord and Savior crowned, but his Court was to be Jerusalem. He

was a Little Hebrew and not a Christian Imperialist. Here is a strong man, obstinate, narrow and combative—as all narrow people are—circumscribed in his views, inhospitable in his attitude, unprepared to soil the kingdom of God with any unclean Gentile. He retires to pray, and something happens. He sees a vision which antagonizes his views, which shatters his poor, flimsy distinctions, which breaks down the walls of his prejudices and sends him away to Cæsarea to baptize an Italian convert whom a few hours before he would have blackballed as an uncircumcised heathen.

In the text we see him in the process of transformation, breaking out into a larger horizon and a wider sympathy. There are days in the spring when we can almost see the buds burst and the green things grow. That was a gracious day in Joppa, and we can see this late plant grow and expand. He climbed up the roof a narrow Jew, he came down a broad and hospitable soul; he went up a provincial and came down a missionary.—Condensed from a Sermon, by Thomas Phillips.

When Christianity Became a World Religion. Dr. Lynn Harold Hough gives the significance of the event at Cæsarea in the following words:

The doctrine of the "chosen people" came to involve the doctrine of the people who were not chosen. The Jew began by rejoicing in his nearness to God. He ended by rejoicing that other people could not get so near.

Peter continued to be a Jew after the Day of Pentecost. The Jewish scales did not fall from his eyes, but a new force was working in his life. We know that something had happened when we find him lodging in the house of Simon a tanner. His fear of ceremonial uncleanness had begun to decrease.

Then comes the vision of the descending sheet. And at last Peter sees the full significance of the experience as the invitation from Cornelius reaches him. He breaks the chain of Jewish exclusiveness. He preaches in the house of Cornelius to the foreign group, and lo! The pentecostal experience comes with its shining glory to the non-Jewish congregation, authenticating Peter's word that God is no respecter of persons. In this hour Christianity ceases to be a Jewish sect and girds itself for its world-winning task.

A Parallel Incident in India. About sixty years ago, John E. Clough was sent to Ongole, India, to take charge of the Lone Star Mission among the Telugus. This enterprise had been organized for about thirty years, but had had so little success that there was a very strong probability of its being abandoned.

Clough entered his work with a vim, and soon some evidences of interest manifested themselves. The high-caste Brahmans who, of course, scorned all persons of lower castes, began to express a willingness to hear more about Christianity and had given encouragement that, if a Christian school were opened, they would support it and send their children. Every one was joyous over this unusual promise of success.

At this juncture a circumstance occurred that put Clough and his associates to a test. A company of Telugus of low caste sought baptism. When the Brahmans heard it they were indignant. "What!" they exclaimed, "know ye not that it is unlawful for us to keep company with these who are outcasts? To mingle with them would be to break our caste and bring defilement upon ourselves. You must have nothing to do with these people if you expect to teach our children or to receive our support."

Here was a challenge. What was to be done? Clough sought help in prayer and the reading of his Bible. His heart took courage in the following passage from 1 Cor. 1.27-29: "But God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong; and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, yea and the things that are not, that he might bring to nought the things that are: that no flesh should glory before God."

While he was reading his wife came to his study and said she had found a solution of the problem. She knew clearly what to do. She had gotten her courage from the same passage of Scripture. After this incident, mission preaching at Ongole to low-caste Telugus was continued with ceaseless energy. The same thing happened that happened to Peter. "The Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word." The first-fruits of this revival were 2,222 believers, and, before a year had passed, 10,000 had been added to the church. The success of the work has continued to this day.

Just as Peter's decision marked a crisis in the apostolic church, so Clough's determination to preach to the low-caste Telugus, as Bishop Thoburn says, "has changed the entire missionary policy of India."—Missionary Comments.

The Missionary Effort of Christianity Today. About this there is much bewildering questioning among hosts of good people. The way to show that Christianity is a religion for the world is not primarily to attack rival religions —though some of them would make a desperately sad showing if thus seriously attacked. The way to make Christianity a world religion is not to whittle down its truths to get a minimum on which all the world can agree. Such whittling process is like cutting a limb from a peach tree, and snipping off the leaves and the fruit and the bark to get a "minimum" of wood substance, which, under the circumstances, is of no use to anybody. The way to make Christianity a world religion is to sow it over the world, that is to say, to teach it chiefly by deed. This means risk. In new fields the seed may take on new theological and organizational power, but the kernel will remain essentially the same.

The writer of this article once visited a Christian hospital in the interior of China. A nurse in charge apologized because the hospital was not "surgically" clean. The explanation was that the Chinese patients often did not enter until they were so badly infected in one way or another that it was almost impossible to prevent the spread of infection. The explanation of this, in turn, was that many Chinese were not willing to come to a Christian hospital except as a last resort, with death standing at the door. Some of their neighbors have told them that Christians will torture sick Chinese. Others have said that Christian hospitals are merely entering wedges for a civilization which seeks to overthrow Chinese liberty. In face of all this, the authorities of the hospital say nothing except that the doors are open for any who care to come in. To all who come they give of their utmost in skill of surgeons and nurses. They meet without complaint the outcry which arises in that Chinese city when a hospital patient dies. They give the best they have without apology or explanation beyond the statement that it is their best, and that any who will take it are welcome to it. Therefore those who do take and find health are seized with a great wonder, which is not satisfied until the seeker for physical health finds also the spiritual health of the Christian kingdom. That hospital is a defender of the Christian faith. It sows seed which, according to divine laws, takes care of itself.—F. J. McConnell, in The Christian Advocate.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. The need of an open mind.

2. What our denomination, church, class is doing to help give the gospel to all men.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What motives led the Church at Antioch to give up Paul and Barnabas as missionaries? 2. Why did not these leaders stay at Antioch until they had made the city thoroughly Christian? 3. How had Paul shown his fitness for missionary work? 4. What was the attitude at this time toward magicians? 5. Was Paul too severe in his denunciation of Elymas? 6. How are men and women today "separated" for the work of missionaries? 7. What is the justification for foreign missionary work?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

FIRST STEPS IN WORLD BROTHERHOOD

Beginning the Lesson. Paul has gone back to Tarsus, his native city. Peter has gone about visiting the little churches that have sprung up through the preaching of the Christian Jews, who were forced to leave Jerusalem at the time of the persecution in which Paul had so zealously joined. Peter has approved of these new churches and has been most helpful in many ways. At Joppa he has been the means of restoring Dorcas to life. What he did at Cæsarea is of very great importance in the history of the church. After it had all happened he returned to Jerusalem where he was most coldly received by his fellow apostles and other believers. Of what did they accuse him? How did Peter answer them?

First Steps in World Brotherhood. Peter was very exclusive. What do I mean by this? "I have known boys and girls in the Sunday School who were very exclusive," writes Grace Winter. "They have a teacher of whom they are

very fond, and they have a nice class of a certain number who are all friends together. When the superintendent puts some scholars from a lower class into this other class which is so select, the boys or girls of this class grumble, and say: 'We don't want strangers in our class. We would rather keep it as it was, and we want our teacher to ourselves.' Have you ever known a class like this?"

Well, the Jews have always felt like that. They had their own laws, their own religion, and they did not want to share their religion with anybody else. Exclusive Peter lay sleeping on the roof of Simon's house during the heat of the day, and God sent him a vision. What was it?

While Peter was thinking about the vision and pondering what it meant, three men came and knocked at the entrance. They were dusty and tired, as if they had come a long distance. They asked for Peter. One of them was a captain. What was his name? Cornelius was a man of good position and used to authority. He was already almost a Christian, for by prayer and works of faith he had been made ready for Peter's message. Cornelius, too, had had a vision: what was it?

And Peter was ready for Cornelius. He had had his vision which rebuked his Jewish pride and prejudices and narrow views, and had made him ready for such a task as awaited him at the home of Cornelius. Who will tell the story of what Peter did?

Cornelius found Christ, and so did the friends and neighbors whom he had invited to hear Peter. And Peter gained something out of that visit, too. He gained a new view, a broader outlook, a new conception of the gospel of Christ. He saw better what that vision on the housetop meant. "Of a truth," he said—what are the rest of the words? That God is the Father of all men, whether Jew or Gentile, black or white or yellow or brown, was the lesson Peter learned. Peter was not the only one who found that in helping another he helped himself; one never gives light to another without getting more light for self.

So this is the way that the story of Jesus began to be carried to all parts of the world. The eunuch whom Philip taught carried it to Africa, Cornelius whom Peter taught carried it to Italy, and groups of Christ's followers were soon to be found in far distant places.

Other Hearts Ready for the Message. Barnabas Shaw landed in Capetown in 1814, but met with strong opposition and was refused permission to preach. His ultimate destination was to work among the heathen blacks of Great Namaqualand, a region lying north of the Orange River.

Taking his little caravan he set out for the north. When he was just about to enter the land of his new work, his progress was suddenly arrested by his meeting another caravan from the north going toward Capetown. It was the chief of Little Namaqualand, a region just south of the Orange River. This chief was traveling south in search of a white teacher. While not necessarily impelled by a desire to hear the gospel, for he did not know there was a gospel, the Spirit of God had led him to desire something better for his people. The missionary and his message satisfied that desire. Within forty years people of this tribe erected a Christian church costing $5,000, from their own contributions.—Missionary Comments.

Our Relations with Those Who Are Different from Us. A prominent lawyer in New Orleans was no less noted for his tolerance than for his legal knowledge. To a friend who once expressed wonder that this trait was so highly developed in him, he said:

"If I have a charitable temper, I owe it to a chance remark of an old uncle of mine when I was a boy. He saw me one day torturing a frog, and said, meditatively, 'Now I wonder why you do that? You are kind to dogs, birds and rabbits.' I replied that the frog was hideous, filthy and useless.

"'Yes, perhaps so,' he said, in the same reflective tone. 'It belongs to a different family from you. It has not the hereditary traits of the dog, the rabbit or the man. But it is not a trait of a frog to fight or despise another creature because it is not like itself. That is the mean, senseless vice of a man.'

"I thought over the remark a long time, trying to understand exactly what he meant by it. After that day I never threw a stone at a frog; and I learned to apply his meaning to the men and women around me."

The girl who at school thinks and talks from another point of view than

yours, is not to be despised or ridiculed or disliked. She has been placed by God in another family. So has the man of another religion or political creed, who crosses your path in after life, or the foreigner, or the woman whose skin is yellow or red or black, while yours is white. Each of them knows his own standing ground, his own blessings and temptations, his own duty to God and his fellows. To his own master he stands or falls. It is for you always to help, but never to judge him.—The Youth's Companion.

Prejudice and Friendliness. An interesting story comes from Washington, D.C. A young woman living in a rooming-house fell and sprained her ankle. The next day a colored woman who was employed in the house as a cleaner brought to the housekeeper a custard for the injured girl, saying: "Here's something for the child to eat. I'm real sorry for her, ef she is white." The inference was not good, but the colored woman was.

The cultured Jews of a city frequently do kind acts for Gentiles which Gentiles might well repay to their less agreeable compatriots.

What opportunities can you find to show a friendly spirit to those not of your own nationality or color?

How to Look at People who Are Different. When I was in China some friends told me about a Chinese servant, a woman with whom they had lived on terms of friendship. While with them she had had a most exquisite sense of order and cleanliness, and kept the house radiantly clean. The thing they stressed most was that everything she did was so exquisitely clean. Then came the time when her family arranged a marriage for her, and she had to leave. A few months afterwards my friend went to visit where she was living because they were so fond of her. They found her living with her husband and five step-children in two tiny rooms not much bigger than a cupboard in a state of filth so indescribable that it was all they could do to sit in the room for a few minutes. Her house, her children, her person, were all filthy. After they came away they felt how horrible it all was that after living in circumstances so different she should relapse so quickly into such a state of filth. Then, because they loved her, they began to reason, and remembered that she was terribly poor. The children were not only dirty, they were underfed. In many parts of China, and notably where she lived, water has to be bought by the bucket and every drop paid for. Would it have been right to buy water for cleanliness when the children were short of food? So my friends said to one another: "Surely we ought rather to have thought how swiftly she seized the opportunity to be clean and orderly the moment she got it instead of thinking how easily she fell into that filth and squalor." But that was because they loved her.

When Christ looks at us in our teeming millions, our squalor, our dirt, our arrogance, what does he see? "Lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white to harvest." That is what he saw, the world ready for God. Under all our stupidities he could see we were really ready for God.

It seems a simple message for me to go all round the world to find, but I have never realized quite how quickly one despises, how stupidly one misunderstands, until I did go to people who seemed so different from myself and from us English people.—Maude Royden.

Sentence Sermons. To render a service to any one is the highest remedy for prejudice against him.—Lyman Abbott.

Christ wishes us to rise above all the divisions of color, race, creed and class, and to be kindly to our kind.—James Wells.

Our gold will buy us many things,
But when I searched in every mart
I could not buy a human heart;
The price of this is love, not gold,
Great love for others, I was told.—H. G. Perry.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where was Antioch? 2. What have we already heard about Barnabas? 3. Who were the first foreign missionaries? 4. Under what circumstances were they sent out? 5. When Jesus sent the Twelve on their first preaching tour, how many did he send together? Why? 6. Name a few great missionaries. 7. What long missionary journey did David Livingstone take? 8. David Brainerd? 9. William Carey?

LESSON IX—AUGUST 30

THE MISSION TO CYPRUS

GOLDEN TEXT: I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Romans 1.16

LESSON Acts 12.25 to 13.12 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 42.6-10

ACTS 12.25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministration, taking with them John whose surname was Mark.

13.1 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was "there," prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. 5 And when they were at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John as their attendant. 6 And when they had gone through the whole island unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-Jesus; 7 who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of understanding. The same called unto him Barnabas and Saul, and sought to hear the word of God. 8. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn aside the proconsul from the faith. 9 But Saul, who is also "called" Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fastened his eyes on him. 10 and said, O full of all guile and all villainy, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? 11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. 12 Then the proconsul, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Return to Antioch from Jerusalem, 12.25. Barnabas and Paul had been to Jerusalem to bring money from the church at Antioch to the brethren there who were suffering from famine, and on their return John Mark was with them, probably as their attendant. See The Historical Background.

II. The Leaders at Antioch, 13.1. In the flourishing church at Antioch there were numerous prophets and teachers, men of special inspiration. Among these was the energetic and lovable Barnabas of Cyprus. Others included Symeon the Black—doubtless an African; Lucius of Cyrene (the province in North Africa lying next to Egypt), who perhaps was one of the Cyrenian evangelists who had established this church at Antioch (Acts 11.20); Manaen—another form of the Hebrew Menahem (2 Kings 15.14)—who was the "foster-brother" of Herod the Tetrarch (Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great), and was seemingly a person of some social importance; and, finally, Paul of Tarsus. Apparently the historian meant Paul's place, at the end of the list, to be emphatic, just as was Barnabas', at the beginning of the roll. These five leaders of the Antiochan church were evidently Grecian Jews.

> "We know nothing of Symeon and Lucius and Manaen, and yet it is good to have their names, for they remind us of the host of faithful witnesses of the truth who stood back of the Christian movement, and encouraged its leaders to carry on. George Eliot, in one of her fine tales, speaks of 'the faithful who are not famous.' What should we do without them? All great causes demand great leaders. Without Paul and Peter and Barnabas the early Church would have been as an undisciplined army without officers, or as a rope of sand; but Niger and Lucius and Manaen were needed as surely as Barnabas and Paul" (The New Outlook).

III. The First Foreign Missionaries Chosen and Ordained, 13.2, 3. While the church, under the leadership of these five men, was carrying on its services of worship, prayer and fasting, an advance movement was initiated under the direction of God. It is probable that the prayer of the church was "awaiting

upon God for special guidance on a matter already occupying their thought; this matter was surely the question of a forward movement into the Roman Empire." Paul and Barnabas, indeed, may have been thinking of this question when they had brought with them from Jerusalem John Mark.

> Whenever and wherever men and women are unitedly spiritual, prayerful, self-denying, carefully taught in Christian truth, and waiting upon the Spirit of God for his guidance in a matter of profound importance to his work, then and there the scene is laid for a mighty Christian enterprise to have its auspicious beginning or to advance its success.

At that juncture the Holy Spirit directed the Antioch Christians to "separate me Barnabas and Paul for the work wherewith I have called them"—for missionary work among the Gentiles. "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God," is the way in which the Holy Spirit spoke. See the First Topic.

> The church sent away their ablest men, their most eloquent preachers, as foreign missionaries. "The progress of that missionary endeavor should remain to all time an impressive lesson to churches and mission boards in the selection of missionaries. The foreign fields need the best. I have known a generosity in giving money and a selfishness in withholding men."

When, with special significance, the other Christians had fasted, prayed and laid their hands on the two missionaries, they sent them away on their mission. That is, they released them for this new ministry—the Greek verb here translated "sent away" signifies rather "set free." This dedication service was somewhat like our modern farewell services for missionaries. The unusual feature of laying of hands on Paul and Barnabas may be understood as not constituting a formal ordination—for the missionaries had long been doing the work of apostles—but as signifying a bestowal of the blessing of the Antioch church on its representatives in the foreign field.

> "These early Christians did not seem to be much affected by the argument that 'There are heathen enough at home'; in Antioch there were a half-million of pagans when the Holy Spirit said, 'Separate me Barnabas and Saul'" (Charles R. Erdman).

IV. The First Foreign Missionary Work in Cyprus, 13.4, 5. Under orders of their Commander-in-Chief—"being sent forth by the Spirit"—Barnabas and Paul set out on their forward movement into the Gentile world. They went down the River Orontes to Seleucia, the seaport of Antioch, sixteen miles distant, and there sailed for the island of Cyprus in the Mediterranean Sea.

> "Historically this is the precise moment at which the foreign missionary enterprise actually began. The fact that we are Christians ourselves, dates back to that obedience of those men in that little ship. They took the little tree of Christianity and transplanted it from the cramping flower-pot of Judaism into the soil of humanity of the whole world. It is an apparently tiny act which, in simple fact, when looked at down the perspective of the centuries, is seen to have changed the history of the world" (Basil Matthews).

At Salamis, the nearest harbor of Cyprus, they stopped awhile, and preached in the synagogue of the Jews. Being traveling preachers, they were everywhere, as we shall see, given at least one hearing in each Jewish synagogue visited.

V. The First Battle-Royal with Paganism, 13.6-12. At Paphos, on the west coast of the island, Paul and Barnabas met the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of understanding, and with him a sorcerer, a Jew named Bar-Jesus, or Elymas, as he was called in Greek. It is interesting that a Roman inscription has been found in which Sergius Paulus is expressly named as holding the office of proconsul. We know that magicians of all kinds were favorably received in Roman society, and it is in no way remarkable that one of them should have gained an influence with the proconsul.

Sergius Paulus desired to hear the Word of God and sent for Barnabas and Paul, but Elymas opposed them and endeavored to turn the proconsul from

the faith. The sorcerer knew that if the proconsul accepted Paul's faith he himself would lose his power over the proconsul, and doubtless much material advantage as well. We may imagine the sorcerer arguing as does the proud Greek in Robert Browning's Cleon:—

"Thou canst not think a mere barbarian Jew,
As Paulus proves to be, one circumcised,
Hath access to a secret shut from us?
Thou wrongest our philosophy, O King,
In stooping to inquire of such an one,
As if his answer could impose at all!"

But Saul, who is also called Paul (and from now on Luke uses only the Roman name of Paul, for Paul is committed to the task of evangelizing the Roman world), filled with the Holy Spirit, bitterly denounced the sorcerer. "'You mass of trickery and rascality,' that is the way Paul begins, and he follows it up with another shot—'You son of the Devil,' and not content with that he hastens to add, 'You enemy of everything that is right, will you never stop diverting the straight paths of the Lord?'" (C. E. Jefferson).

Paul then announced to the sorcerer that he should become blind—and this at once came about. "Virtually Paul pronounced sentence: If you choose to be spiritually and mentally blind, then be blind physically. Learn what blindness really is" (R. C. Gillie). We may note in passing that in Korea today the profession of witchcraft is reserved for the blind.

The blindness of Elymas helped to open the eyes of the proconsul. When he saw Elymas seeking some one to lead him by the hand, Sergius Paulus believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

"The miracle had its place as the bellman of the church, but the preacher's message was the secret of salvation. If the miracle had been more surprising than the message, Christianity would not have occupied the place that it does today. The doctrine of Christ is infinitely more convincing than any miracle he ever worked. If the great truths of the gospel do not find us, no sign or specter will avail. The grand appeal of the gospel is not to our wonder, but to the conscience and heart" (W. L. Watkinson).

"The story has a quaint sound, and is not without its modern applications which are strangely suggestive. Unless today men have the prudence of a Sergius Paulus they will, on the one hand, be misled by all manner of Elymases who teach theosophy, Christian nescience, pagan-hearted Buddhism, moonshiny Babism, or what not, and will, on the other, have no eyes to see the truly Christian evidences which both by theoretic argument and practical exemplification attest the truth as it is in Jesus, and the reality of the blessedness which is found in him. Without prudence a man becomes the sport of every wind of doctrine, every flurry of wild opinion, every psychologic storm, every reckless passion; but with such spiritual sensibility, joined with caution and candor, even the wayfaring man ceases to be a fool, and walks safely in the paths which lead to the Reality which hides behind the phenomena, and to the Truth which is personalized in Jesus the Christ" (Zion's Herald).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

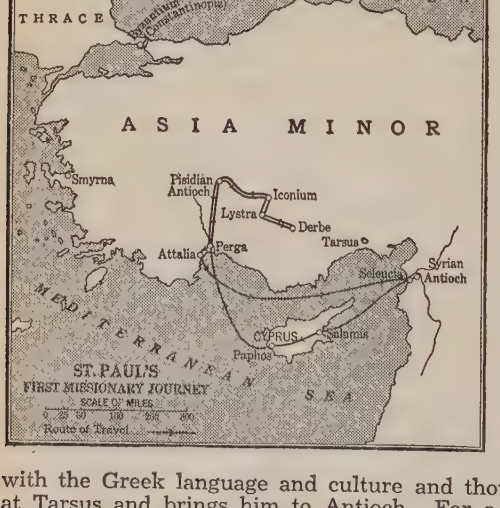
A sorcerer, 13.6. "It is very generally assumed that Elymas was a mere vulgar impostor, but in those days there was no dividing line between science and magic. The student of science dabbled in sorcery, the magician or sorcerer had often a wonderful knowledge of the power of nature. Perhaps the most striking illustration of this is in connection with the science of medicine. On the island of Cos and at Epidaurus in Greece the ruins of medical sanatoria have been laid bare, which show that gross superstition was associated with a knowledge of the principles of hygiene which the world has only recovered within the last fifty years. Let it not therefore be placed to the discredit of Sergius Paulus that he sought the society of one who professed to hold communion with powers unseen" (C. N. Johnston). "All the Greek and Latin literature of the empire, from Horace to Lucian, abounds in proof of the prevalent credulity of this skeptical period. The great Marius had in his camp a Syrian prophetess, by whose divinations he regulated the progress of his

campaigns. As Brutus, at the beginning of the Republic, had visited the oracle at Delphi, so Pompey, Crassus, and Cæsar, at the close of the Republic, when the oracles were silent, sought information from Oriental astrology. No picture of the great Latin satirist Juvenal is more powerfully drawn than that in which he shows us the Emperor Tiberius 'sitting on the rock of Capri with his flock of Chaldeans round him.'"

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In our lesson about the martyrdom of Stephen, you will recall that our text included verses 19-21 of the eleventh chapter of the Acts, where Luke takes a look backward and, recalling the tribulation that arose about Stephen, tells us that it resulted in the disciples being scattered abroad and that some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, went as far as Phœnicia, Cyprus, and Antioch of Syria, all the time preaching to Jews only. These humble and unnamed disciples next took a great step forward in the history of the Church—they preached also to the Greeks at Antioch. We can readily understand that this revolutionary step did not please the church at Jerusalem, but instead of hastily condemning it, they sent Barnabas to investigate the situation. Barnabas may have been chosen because he was himself a native of Cyprus and would be inclined to view the situation sympathetically. When Barnabas saw the genuineness of the conversion of the Gentiles, he was glad. Luke adds that Barnabas was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith, and it is always the mark of a good man to rejoice in good work, whether or not it is done in the customary way.

The history of the Christian Church during its first hundred years has been aptly called a tale of three cities—Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome. The tale of Jerusalem as the center of Christian activity for fifteen years after the ascension of Jesus, we have now finished, and today we take up the tale of Antioch. Hitherto the Jews, with a few exceptions, have been the only believers in Jesus as the Christ; now the gospel is carried to the Gentiles in Antioch and thence to the great cities of Asia Minor and Greece and Italy.



Through the efforts of Barnabas, the church at Jerusalem had accepted Paul as a brother after his conversion, but we hear nothing of him after he was forced to make his escape to Tarsus (see The Historical Background, Lesson VI). Ten or twelve years have passed since his conversion, and now Barnabas needs help at Antioch. The need is urgent. He knows just the right man for the place, one who has the necessary breadth of mind and sympathy of heart, a Hellenistic Jew like himself, familiar with the Greek language and culture and thought. He seeks and finds Paul at Tarsus and brings him to Antioch. For a year they labor together with the church.

We next hear of their collecting money for famine sufferers in Jerusalem, each man giving according to his ability, and sending it by Barnabas and Paul. On their return these two leaders brought John Mark with them as their helper.

It was on his way to Damascus to persecute the followers of Christ that Paul received his call to be an apostle. It was at Antioch in Syria that he received his ordination as a foreign missionary.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

For the location of Antioch, Cyrene and the island of Cyprus, see Lesson IV of this Quarter.

With a population of half a million, Antioch ranked as the third largest and wealthiest city of the Roman Empire, Rome being the first and Alexandria the second. Its main street, which ran for five miles through the city, was paved with blocks of white marble and lined with double colonnades of marble. "Trees, flowers and fountains adorned the promenade, and poets sang of the beauty of the statue of Apollo and of the Nymphæum erected near the river."

To Antioch came the richly laden caravans from Persia and India. Read the account in Ben Hur. It was a city of great luxury and equally great wickedness. So notorious was it for its shameless corruption that Juvenal, the satirist, characterized the degradation of Rome by saying that "The Syrian Orontes has flowed into the Tiber." "Such a city was a field white for the harvest, gasping like a thirsty land for a renovating and life-giving gospel, and the large fringe of Gentile adherents who hung around the synagogue offered the Christian evangelist a golden opportunity."

Ruins at Salamis

Luke tells us that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. Because of the influence upon later events of the preaching at Antioch to Gentiles, the city has been called the second birthplace of Christianity. This city became Paul's headquarters, and from it he started on his great missionary journeys. In the later history of the Church, Antioch became famous for its school of theology. Ignatius the martyr was bishop here, and Chrysostom, who was later Patriarch of Constantinople (died in 407), was a native of Antioch. In the third and fourth centuries ten church councils were held at Antioch.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

How indebted we are to Barnabas, as the agent of God, for setting Paul upon his wonderful career of usefulness! There are people everywhere today whose talents are lost to God's Kingdom because no Barnabas has brought them out of their hiding places. A church school teacher has a fine opportunity to be a Barnabas, a friend of the retiring folk, a bringer into light of great workers in God's vineyard. Have you a singer among your pupils whose gift can be used in God's house? Have you a thoughtful pupil who should be trained for leadership? Is there a quiet, retiring man or woman in your class who needs to be brought out of a modest corner that he may serve?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

CHRISTIANITY AT COURT

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with The Historical Background.

The Holy Spirit Said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul. The method of God is not different today from that which prevailed in the past. In our time a church convention, after due consideration of qualifications and opportunities, decides to send missionaries to some promising field, and on the minutes of the session it is recorded as an action of the body that has exercised its consecrated wisdom in the transaction. If the writers of the apostolic age had been chronicling the event, they would have written that the Spirit said to the

church: Separate me these men for the work to which I have called them. Both records would be true, but the second would be in greater harmony with all the facts. We have not yet learned to write the story of the church or the proceedings of Christian bodies in such vivid and vital terms.—Editorial in The Christian Century.

Continue with Explanations and Comments.

How God Puts forth His Men. I wonder how they came to be so sure that thus the Spirit of God spake. I do not believe at all that it was a sudden prophetic utterance given to some one ecstatic believer. I believe that in the midst of this church's prayerful life there grew up a conviction that the Lord had been enlarging, training and equipping two of their fellow-laborers, and that the meaning of it all was that the great harvest field was calling these two out of their midst. God had set the light of great enterprises in the eyes of these two men and was preparing for them. One of them had kept a secret word for long in his heart: "I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." He knew that the time of its full revealing would come, and presently it did come. The church interpreted it for him. It was by the sight of the great, mighty-faithed Barnabas, and the indomitable energy and courage of Paul among these Christians of Antioch, by the unspeakable conviction that there was that come to pass in these two which could not be cabined within the discussions of a local church meeting, that the irresistible missionary argument was brought to bear upon this church.

Now I cannot but feel that it is in this fashion that God speaks to the church still concerning its too easily forgotten tasks. God is always putting forth his men. They arise with the call of God plainly upon them, the capacity for long visions shining in them. He finds them in a little Syrian community, and lo! Paul and Barnabas are given to make great history. He moves in a Jesuit fraternity and lo! Francis Xavier becomes pioneer of the cross. He is at work in little Christian communities, in Scotch hamlets and Welsh villages, and amid English factories and workshops, and now it is a Moffat or a Livingstone, a Morrison or a Mackay, a Chalmers or a Griffith John that is thrust forth. God finds them, and when the live and loyal churches in the midst of which they have arisen look upon them with Spirit-opened eyes, they know that in their appearing the Spirit is speaking to the churches.—Thomas Yates.

Missionary Statesmanship. A few years ago foreign missionary enterprise belonged to the region of sentiment, and now it has been transferred to that of statesmanship. Formerly Christian thought wandered out in a romantic and irresponsible way among lands far distant, and the result was infinitely picturesque but in many cases it was hardly taken seriously beyond the inner circle of the devout. Today, every intelligent believer in Christianity knows that mere zeal is not all that is required for effective work in the foreign field, nor is he much moved by such curious motives as the desire to hasten the end of the world and the coming of Christ by completing the preaching itinerary of the world. Instead of that he takes foreign missionaries seriously as a necessary department of all real statesmanship.

In the first place, in the choice of the field we have to distinguish between races that have a future before them and races which are obviously dying out. The means of reaching the population of the world with Christian propaganda is lamentably limited, and since we cannot at the present time hope to reach all, we must select those among whom we shall labor. Statesmanship demands that the gospel shall be sent to the fountainheads of future civilization, and to lands which will in a generation or two exercise the strongest influence upon the world.

A second matter of detail is the choice of missionaries. In the days when missions were a sentiment, the only requirements for a foreign missionary's career were piety and zeal. But, when one comes to reflect upon it, it is surely obvious that the work of a foreign missionary is one of the most highly specialized of all the professions, and that further qualifications are necessary to insure fitness for effective work in it.—John Kelman, in Some Aspects of International Christianity.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. Paul's varied experiences in preparation for his life work. Acts 9.19-30; Gal. 1.15-24; 2 Cor. 11.32, 33. Paul finds his life

work: see Chapter V of The Story of St. Paul's Life and Letters, by J. Paterson Smyth.

2. The missionaries whom our church has sent out.

3. Sorceries and "isms" of today which lead men from the truth.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What do you think was the reason of John Mark's desertion? 2. To what disagreement later between Paul and Barnabas did John Mark's defection at Perga lead? (Acts 15.36-40.) 3. What did Paul afterwards say about John Mark in his letter to Timothy? 4. Give an analysis of Paul's address in the synagogue. 5. What did Paul mean by saying that the Jews had judged themselves unworthy of eternal life? 6. How did the Jews decide their own fate? 7. How do the words of Jesus in Jn. 5.39, 40, say that the Jews of his day judged themselves unworthy of eternal life? 8. How did Jesus say that each one decides his own fate, as recorded in Jn. 12.47, 48? 9. What is the meaning of the last part of verse 48?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

MISSIONARY ADVENTURES IN CYPRUS

Beginning the Lesson. Adventure—this is what we are to think about today. Our subject has the thrill of travel in foreign lands, the sight of strange places, the mingling with strange people, the hearing of strange languages, and the fascination of not knowing what yet more exciting experiences the next day or even hour may bring. It has also the adventure of the carrying into such new surroundings and to such strange people of that most thrilling news that the world ever has heard—the good news of the power and love of Christ.

One Sunday afternoon many years ago a minister was preaching in a small country chapel in Wales. He was to preach that evening in Penmorva where he would have a far larger chapel and far larger congregation. Evidently the latter opportunity was greatly upon his mind, for over and over in his afternoon address he cried, "O Lord, remember Penmorva!" His congregation was restive. Then suddenly, after one of these ejaculations, the earnest voice of a young girl cried out, "O Lord, remember the world!" Instantly, the whole atmosphere was changed, and the preacher himself said, "Oh, yes, that is better—much better."

Paul and Barnabas had been preaching to the people with such success, that not only had large numbers believed in the Christ, whom they preached but the church was ready and anxious to be the means of making Christ known far and near. Whom did the church send as their representatives? How were Paul and Barnabas chosen?

My Favorite Missionary Text. It is this: "So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus."

It is my favorite for these, among other, reasons:

1. It is a vivid, actual, living picture, and so stirs a man of my own rather simple type, who finds it difficult to grasp or be inspired by an abstract idea till it is seen in action.

2. Historically it is the precise moment at which the foreign missionary enterprise actually began. The fact that we are Christians ourselves dates back to that obedience of those men in that little ship. They took the little tree of Christianity and transplanted it from the cramping flower-pot of Judaism into the soil of humanity—of the whole world.

3. Conversely, it connects our missionary enterprise up with theirs. Our missions are "The Acts of the Apostles" running in serial form to the end of time.

4. It shows the young church—itself in a heathen city surrounded by foes—sending as its foreign missionaries its absolute best.

5. It is an apparently tiny act which, in simple fact, when looked at down the perspective of the centuries, is seen to have changed the history of the world.

6. It gets back to the ultimate and eternal power of missions—the Holy Spirit of God urgent in a man and backed by the church.—Basil Mathews.

At the Court of Sergius Paulus. Barnabas and Paul were led into the presence of the proconsul, through the courtyards, where fountains played in the

sunshine and kept the air cool. Round him were his courtiers and personal guards. Among them was a dark-haired Jew named Bar-jesus, a name which means "Son of a Savior." He was a wizard of the East who knew mysterious incantations and professed to read the future by means of the stars. He could perform marvels and bend the wills of men to his own by hypnotic powers. All round the Great Sea in all the cities of the Roman Empire were men like this sorcerer, who put manacles on the minds of men by their great powers of magic. One great Roman general, for instance, fell so low as to conduct all his campaigns on the advice of an Oriental fortune-telling woman. This wizard, Bar-jesus, was in the court of Sergius Paulus because he was trying to get power over the man who was supreme in all Cyprus.

Sergius Paulus told Barnabas and Paul that he had heard of their teachings from others, but wished to know more about it from themselves. Then Paul stood forward. He himself was called by the same name as this Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus, to whom he was now telling the new knowledge of the nature of God as shown in Jesus Christ, with all the learning of the Jewish graduate, and talking in Greek, the language of cultivated men throughout the imperial cities of the Great Sea.

Elymas the "wise" (as Bar-jesus arrogantly called himself) looked at Sergius Paulus and saw how pleased he was with Paul's teaching. The sorcerer's brow lowered, his face glowed with anger. His power was in peril, all his influence was at stake. If Paul won the Roman ruler, then Elymas' career was at an end.

Impulsively he stepped forward and began to try to draw the mind of Sergius Paulus away. Paul's hot blood was up immediately. He turned his eyes on Elymas, and said: "You son of the devil (though called Bar-jesus, Son of a Savior), you enemy of all good, full of craftiness and cunning, will you never stop twisting the straight paths of the Lord? See here, the Lord's hand will fall on you and you will be blind, unable to see the sun for a time."

The figures of Paul and Barnabas, the proconsul, the marble columns, the shining light—all faded. Elymas, the sorcerer, was blind. They saw his hands grope, his sightless eyes turn vainly around. Some one took him by the hand and led him away.

In his first battle, Paul had routed magic and had won the Roman ruler to the strong and knightly vision that belongs to a good soldier of Christ.—Condensed from Paul the Dauntless, by Basil Mathews.

A Blind Sorcerer's Efforts to Learn the Word. A missionary in Korea tells an interesting story about a man who was a member of the guild to which the sorcerer Bar-jesus belonged. In Korea witchcraft is a profession, and it is reserved for the blind. This sorcerer became a Christian and was eager to learn the Bible. In order to do this he cut up Standard Oil tin cans into five thousand small squares. He made a hole through each square and threaded it on a string, making indentations in the corners to indicate various letters of the Korean alphabet. The final consonants he indicated with two thousand pieces of wood of varying shapes. When all this was done, as a friend read to him from John's Gospel he formed sentence after sentence by threading his tin and wooden squares on a string. Then by running his fingers over the crude types he was able to commit to memory the first six chapters. Later he heard about a school for the blind at Pyeng Yang and groped his way there, three hundred miles away, on foot. In a month he had learned to read by the point system. He now thinks that in three years he will have memorized the whole New Testament. He is at work among the hundreds of Korean blind sorcerers trying to lead them to become Christians.

Sentence Sermons. I would not have you, if God meant you to be a missionary, drivel down into a king.—Spurgeon.

Our communion with the Lord in prayer always leads to fellowship with the Lord in service.—J. H. Jowett.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. For what is Antioch of Syria remembered in the history of the early church? 2. For what is Antioch of Pisidia remembered? 3. Where was Antioch of Pisidia? 4. Where was Iconium? 5. What scene in the life of Jesus is recalled by Paul's reception in the synagogue? (Lk. 4.16-30.) 6. What made the Jews so jealous? 7. Where is the quotation in verse 47 found? (Footnote of your Bible.)

LESSON X—SEPTEMBER 6

TURNING TO THE GENTILES

GOLDEN TEXT: I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth. Acts 13.47

LESSON Acts 13.13-52; Romans 1.14-16; 11.1-24
DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 72.6-13

ACTS 13.42 And as they went out, they besought that these words might be spoken to them the next sabbath. 43 Now when the synagogue broke up, many of the Jews and of the devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas; who, speaking to them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.

44 And the next sabbath almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God. 45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy, and contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul, and blasphemed. 46 And Paul and Barnabas spake out boldly, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, "saying,"

I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles,
That thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth.

48 And as the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of God: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was spread abroad throughout all the region. 50 But the Jews urged on the devout women of honorable estate, and the chief men of the city, and stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and cast them out of their borders. 51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

ROMANS 1.14 I am debtor both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. 15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Result of Paul's First Sermon in the Synagogue at Pisidian Antioch, Acts 13.42-44. See The Historical Background. After Paul's sermon, he and Barnabas withdrew from the synagogue, while the congregation remained for the end of the service and the formal dismissal. As they left they were urged to speak again the following Sabbath. When the synagogue services were over, many Jews and proselytes (Gentile converts to Judaism) followed Paul and Barnabas to their place of abode and Paul urged them to continue in the grace of God. This is the first use in The Acts of the phrase, "the grace of God," i.e., "redemption from sin freely offered in Christ." "Grace" expresses the spontaneity and generosity of God's love: God freely grants his pardon and bestows his love in Christ.

II. The Jealousy and Antagonism of the Jews Aroused, Acts 13.44, 45. As a result of the wide-spread discussion of Paul's sermon and of the work of Paul and Barnabas during the week that followed, "almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God" on the next Sabbath. (A different Greek phrase is used in verse 42 for "the next Sabbath" from that in verse 44, and some scholars translate it in verse 42 as "during the intervening week." "The Jewish congregations had a portion of the Law read in the synagogues not only on the Sabbath but on Monday and on Thursday mornings, that they might not be for three days without hearing Scripture. The peculiar expression may apply to the meetings in the synagogue on these days" (P. Rawson Lumby). The preaching of Paul during the week created a tremendous interest.

When the Jews saw the multitude they were filled with jealousy. Their antagonism was due primarily, not to opposition to Paul's words, but to envy of his success. It was not loyalty to sacred truth which led the Jews to contradict Paul and to blaspheme.

It would always be well to uncover the often unobserved but very powerful part which envy, pride of party, self-advantage, expectation of per-

sonal gain, and other unworthy motives sometimes play in vehement and zealous contentions for the truth.

III. Turning to the Gentiles, Acts 13.46-49. Finding that the Jews would not hear them, Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." This speech of Paul's is "an apology for the Gentile Mission, which occurs frequently in the following narrative and appears to suggest that the apostles would not have spoken to the Gentiles at all, if the Jews had listened to their brethren" (Dummelow). Notice the well-guarded balance between God's sovereign purpose for man and man's free determination of his own life: "It was necessary," but "ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy." "The revelation of Divine grace in the gift of Jesus Christ, the token of eternal life in his resurrection from the dead, the offer of spiritual freedom, of pardon, peace and joy,—all were thrust from them, repudiated and rejected because these things were to be a common heritage" (John Gardner).

"'He came unto his own and his own received him not': these words are an assertion of the awful ultimateness of the power of free will in man" (Phillips Brooks).

In declaring that they are commanded to turn to the Gentiles Paul quoted Isaiah 49.6: I have set thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth.

"God took the Jewish candle out of the candlestick because it would not be the light of the world, and the nation went into darkness," said Dr. Babcock. "It was for the same reason that the Church went into the Dark Ages—it turned its candle into a dark lantern, and said, 'As long as I see the light I do not care who is in the dark.'"

When the Gentiles heard this, they rejoiced, and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. They were ordained to eternal life, but not apart from their desire and disposition; on the other hand, they were saved by no mere disposition or inclination on their part, apart from God's grace. "All who by the grace of God desired eternal life, accepted the faith" (Farrar).

Election involves candidacy, as a negro slave shrewdly put it who, when asked by his reckless and godless master, "Sambo, do you think I am elected to be saved?" replied, "Massa, I'se never know'd you was a candidate."

And the word of the Lord was spread abroad throughout all the region.

IV. Persecution, Acts 13.50-52. The hostile Jews now had recourse to "the devout women of honorable estate, and the chief men of the city"—the Roman colonists, the local aristocracy, as Professor Ramsay calls them, who were the high privileged class and held the reins of government. These joined forces with the Jews in persecuting Paul and Barnabas till they were driven from the city.

"The honors and influence which belonged to women in the cities of Asia Minor form one of the most remarkable features in the history of the country. Under the Roman Empire we find women magistrates, presidents of games, and loaded with honors. The custom of the country influenced even the Jews, who in at least one case appointed a woman at Smyrna to the position of ruler of the synagogue. It would be strange if the women had not exercised some influence over St. Paul's fortunes" (Wm. E. Ramsay).

Paul and Barnabas shook off the dust of their feet against them. This was not a childish act nor a sign of contempt or ill-will, but was symbolic action implying that those to whom it was done were left to go their own way. "If they will not accept heaven, let them retain earth and its dust" (Starke). Recall the words of Jesus in Luke 9.5: "And as many as receive you not, when ye depart from that city, shake off the dust from your feet for a testimony against them."

No attempt was made to suppress the new movement itself, for as long as all danger of riots was avoided by expelling the leaders, the Roman rulers were

content; and as long as the objects of their jealousy were driven out of the city, the Jews were content for a time.

The newly won disciples were not discouraged. Their leaders were banished, but the living Christ remained, and they were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

The religion of Jesus Christ is Good News—why should not all who have heard it be filled with joy? The life of a Christian, whatever his lot, need not be drab and somber, but bright, buoyant, joyous.

V. The Universal Gospel, Romans 1.14-16. "I am debtor," wrote Paul to the Romans, "both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish." The gospel belongs to all mankind: those who have it are by that fact constituted debtors to all who have it not. Paul felt a peculiar call and obligation to Greek and barbarian. Christ sent him to the Gentiles.

On every Christian, this debtorship rests until every man has been given the gospel. If one has no impelling desire and purpose to give the gospel to all men, it may well be questioned whether he has the gospel. To experience Christ is to feel a wish to share him.

"So, as far as in me lies, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome," wrote Paul.

"As far as in me lies, I am ready" would soon give the gospel its full triumph. "We ought to long for opportunities of usefulness as worldly men do for a prosperous trade or for an occasion of distinguishing themselves and acquiring celebrity."

"This tent-maker, member of one of the most stubborn and troublesome races Rome had overcome, purposed going to Rome and proclaiming in that imperial city and to its people, proud with consciousness of world supremacy, the new religion of humility, love and self-sacrifice. He was to carry amid temples wherein the worshipers prayed to a sensual, variable, but all powerful being, imagined as seated on Olympus, and to gods and goddesses typifying human passions and frailties, the teachings of mercy, purity, Omnipotent and Infinite Power inviting mankind to peace and brotherhood in life and eternal happiness after death. He knew he must face derisive contempt of nobles, courtiers, politicians, and leaders of public opinion and sentiment, fury of mobs, scornful hate of officials. The Jew went right onward and forward, obeying the God of his fathers, following his Lord, doing his duty, fulfilling his mission, love for his own race and people burning within him, but defying anguish of mind and spirit and body and the axe, the arena, cross, and gibbet, to carry Christ to the Gentile" (B. A. M. Schapiro).

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." "First" is a doubtful reading here. No longer is there need for any apology for thinking that the gospel belongs to the Gentile as well as to the Jew. Paul no longer accentuates to the Jew first, but now freely affirms that it is for the Jew and also for the Greek. It is the power of God unto salvation to every one—Jew or Greek or Barbarian, wise or unwise—who believeth.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

After the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on, Acts 13.15. The meeting of the congregation in the ancient synagogues may be easily realized, if due allowance be made for the change of costume, by those who have seen the Jews at their worship in the large towns of Modern Europe.

On their entrance into the building, the four-cornered Tallith was first placed like a veil over the head, or like a scarf over the shoulders. The prayers were then recited by an officer called the "Angel," or "Apostle," of the Assembly. These prayers were doubtless many of them identically the same with those which are found in the present service-books of the German and Spanish Jews, though their liturgies, in the course of ages, have undergone successive developments, the steps of which are not easily ascertained. It seems that the

prayers were sometimes read in the vernacular language of the country where the synagogue was built; but the Law was always read in Hebrew. The sacred roll of manuscript was handed from the Ark to the Reader by the Chazan, or "Minister"; and then certain portions were read according to a fixed cycle, first from the Law and then from the Prophets. It is impossible to determine the period when the sections from these two divisions of the Old Testament were arranged as in use at present; but the same necessity for translation and explanation existed then as now. The Hebrew and English are now printed in parallel columns. Then, the reading of the Hebrew was elucidated by the Targum or the Septuagint, or followed by a paraphrase in the spoken language of the country. The Reader stood while thus employed, and all the congregation sat around. The manuscript was rolled up and returned to the Chazan. Then followed a pause, during which strangers or learned men, who had "any word of consolation" or exhortation, rose and addressed the meeting. And thus, after a pathetic enumeration of the sufferings of the chosen people or an allegorical exposition of some dark passage of Holy Writ, the worship was closed with a benediction and a solemn "Amen!"—Conybeare and Howson, in The Life and Epistles of St. Paul.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Last week we traveled with Paul and Barnabas from Antioch in Syria to its port of Seleucia and then over the Mediterranean to the island of Cyprus, and across that island from Salamis to Paphos. There is no record of results from the mission to Cyprus except the confounding of Elymas and the belief of Sergius Paulus. We may assume, however, that there were other results, as in all the other centers of his first missionary journey. (When the second journey was being planned, Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return now and visit the brethren in every city wherein we proclaimed the Word of the Lord and see how they fare," 15.36. It was clearly in his mind to return to Cyprus as well as to the other churches, and when Paul and Barnabas separated, Barnabas went to Cyprus.)

From Paphos in Cyprus the missionaries sailed to Perga in the province of Pamphylia. Either the vessel sailed up the River Castrus or, landing at Attalia, they covered the few miles to Perga by land. Here John Mark left them. The reason for his defection has been much discussed. What it was can only be conjectured.

On the Sabbath day at Antioch of Pisidia Paul and Barnabas attended the synagogue services. After the reading of the Law and the Prophets the rulers of the synagogue asked them to speak. Paul's address is recorded in verses 16-41, which immediately precede our printed text. There were no officials whose duty it was to read or speak; the ruler called upon whom he would for the services. The scribes, who were the copyists of the Scriptures and the lawyers of the Jews, and the rabbis, who were the learned doctors of the law, were the ones who usually expounded the scriptures, though any Israelite of ability could perform this service. Professor Ramsay concludes that Paul and Barnabas took seats in some special place, thus indicating that they desired to address the people, or else that previously they had made known to these rulers their character and mission as teachers. Paul was a Jewish rabbi, and probably wore some insignia that distinguished him as such.

Paul began his speech with Jewish history. The Jews never tired of hearing this. And then he went on to show that in persecuting and killing Jesus the Jews had been fulfilling prophecy, for Jesus was in very truth God's promised Messiah. With Paul's sermon compare Peter's in Chapter 2, and Stephen's in Chapter 7.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

From Perga in Pamphylia it was a hard journey of a hundred miles up the rugged mountainside through narrow gorges, in "peril of robbers," 2 Cor. 11.26, to Antioch of Pisidia, in the province of Galatia.

The peninsula which we now call Asia Minor was divided for administrative purposes into the Roman Provinces of Asia on the west, Bithynia and Pontus on the north; Galatia and Cappadocia in the center; and Lycia, Pamphylia and Cilicia on the south.

Antioch of Pisidia (Pisidia was a district of the province of Galatia) was nearly four thousand feet above the sea level, and its pure air would prove refreshing and health-giving after a sojourn in Perga near the coast. It was one of sixteen Antiochs founded by Seleucus Nikator and named after his father Antiochus. Do not confound it with Antioch in Syria. It was Antioch in Syria where the disciples were first called Christians and from which Paul started out on his three great missionary journeys. It was Antioch of

Roman Provinces, Peninsula of Asia Minor

Pisidia where Paul made his first public address that has come down to us, and where he first publicly turned to the Gentiles.

Iconium was east of Pisidian Antioch and was an important city. It was as old as Damascus, Professor Ramsay believes. It is today a flourishing city on the Bagdad Railroad.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Paul and Barnabas departed, and the new converts in Antioch were left without leaders. To be a follower of Christ meant persecution, they learned. But they were not depressed. Rather were they filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. The Christian's joy and peace should not depend upon human teachers nor upon circumstances, but upon the comradeship of Christ himself. As teachers, we should seek to build our pupils' faith, not on ourselves nor on our formulas of truth, but wholly on Christ, that, with changes of teachers and with new formulas of truth, their faith may not be moved nor their joy taken away.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

A LIGHT UNTO THE GENTILES

Beginning the Lesson. In Paul's day, the Gentiles were barred people as far as the religious advantages of the Jews were concerned. God had given the Gentiles many things, but the knowledge of the God of Israel was not intended for them, so the Jews held. The tragedy of Jewish history is that the distinguishing privilege bestowed upon the Jews bred in them a spirit of selfishness. The revelation of God given to them as a trust, they counted as a private property. It took years even for Paul himself to grow out of all his Jewish exclusiveness into the mind and heart of the Apostle to the Gentiles. He had preached for some time to Gentiles, many of whom were Jewish proselytes, and so more or less acceptable to Jewish prejudices, but always there lingered some feeling of hesitation. He preached in the synagogues, partly because they afforded him a ready audience, partly because the con-

gregations in the synagogues were the people most interested in religion, but chiefly because in some measure he continued to feel that the gospel belonged to the Jew first. It was at Antioch in Pisidia that he took his final stand on the truth which had been slowly shaping itself into definite form in his mind. The persistent and bitter opposition of the Jewish leaders at last drove him into the purpose of turning to the Gentiles. His particular mission from Antioch in Pisidia onward was to the Gentiles. The Book of The Acts can be read with full understanding only when it is read as the account of the growth of the idea of the universality of the gospel.

Paul's Alternative. Of Napoleon it has been said that "He never for a moment lost sight of his way onward in the dazzle and uproar of present circumstances." For Paul there is always far more of uproar than of dazzle in his circumstances, of opposition than of glory, but never once does he lose sight of his goal. The Jews in Antioch of Pisidia will not hear him; he will turn, then, to the Gentiles. He will go on and on, till he has made Christ known throughout the Roman Empire, ceasing not in his forward movement till death itself arrests him.

"Other things being equal, supposing it were the last chance and you the last preacher, which ought you to preach to—the man who has had the gospel offered him every day of his life for fifty years, or the one who does not so much as know that there is a gospel?" questions Professor E. E. Hale. "Paul made his decision very definitely. 'Lo,' said he, 'we turn to the Gentiles.' It was very fortunate for us here in America that he did so.

"Of course we do not have the sharp alternative offered to us that the text presents. The Church today can preach at home and abroad, too. But we shall do well to remember this lesson when we have to decide which is the more important. We ought to remember that when two things are good, it may be that one is more important than the other."

Paul Was an Adventurer. Paul was as adventurous an explorer as Shackleton or Byrd or even a Columbus. He was a pioneer in great spiritual truths. It took an understanding heart, a clear head, a sympathetic soul and genuine courage to free the God of Israel from Jewish narrowness and make him the Father of all men everywhere. Possibly John Mark failed, not from physical courage, but from inability to keep abreast of the development of truth. His may have been the failure of static thinking and the acceptance of things as they are.

Are we living the life of spiritual adventurers, putting truth to ever new and wider applications? The day of the Christian pioneer is not over. Paul calls for new comrades in universalizing the gospel. Let us not limit missions today to a horizontal distribution of truth to people of other races, but let us apply missionary zeal to the vertical application of Christian ideals to all the levels of living in our own homeland which fall below the standards of Christ.

Christianity Is for All. One of the first converts of Neesima in Japan was an influential citizen of a suburb of Kioto. When it became known he was at once summoned to appear before the Kioto magistrates. In the course of the conversation, one of the officials said: "We have good and sufficient religion here in Japan; we do not want any more. We have Confucianism for scholars like you, and Buddhism for the masses."

To this Neesima replied: "If Confucianism is an all-sufficient religion, why is it, since the founder lived thousands of years before Christ and taught during a long life, that it has not spread beyond China and Japan? And if Buddhism is an all-sufficient religion, how is it, started by Buddha thousands of years before Christ, and taught by him through a long life, that it has not spread beyond India, China and Japan? And if Christianity is a bad religion, how is it since its Founder only taught three years, and was put to death when he was thirty-three years old, that it has spread all over Europe and America, and is spreading all over Africa and Asia and all the islands of the sea?"

This story is quoted in "Missionary Comments," prepared for the Young People's Missionary Movement, and these words are added: "When Jesus is received into the heart, he is as much at home in the cities by the Indus and the Nile as in those by the Hudson and the Clyde. We cannot think of a

Western Mohammed. We can hardly think of a Western Buddha, but you discover nothing local or provincial about Jesus Christ. It makes not the least difference where men may preach his gospel; to the most cultured Europeans or the most barbarous Africans, to the thoughtful Hindus, or to the North American savages, among the naked Hottentots or among the fur-clad Esquimaux; he finds a true home in the hearts of all who receive him, because he is the universal Man, and even the three hundred names given him in the Scriptures do not exhaust his million-sided personality."

The Chinese View of a New Light Needed for the Chinese. We must realize that the frontier of our missionary enterprise has changed, and with it we must also change the old tactics. It seems to me that we have arrived at the stage in the history of missions when it is no longer worth while for missionary leaders to study the Christian approaches to Buddhism, Confucianism, etc. The scientific study of these non-Christian religions will have historic and academic interest, but it has ceased to have the same practical importance in missionary work it used to have up to twenty or even ten years ago.

While Christianity is making inroads into these religions from one side, these religions are suffering a great deal more in the rear, from a group of new enemies who have advanced so far into their territory, that for all practical purposes Christianity must ignore the incapacitated older religions and think of its frontier work in forms of what it will have to do with these same new forces,—scientific agnosticism, material determination, political fascism, and moral iconoclasm.—William Hung, of Yenching University.

From the Heart of a Hebrew Christian. After these nineteen centuries will the Gentiles to whom this Jew brought Christ, whose hearts and souls are yet gladdened and glorified by his preaching and teaching, who make his verses texts for their sermons, give his name to so many of their churches and enroll him as one of the foremost of their saints—will they do aught to carry Christ to the Jew who in the faithful heart of Paul was first?

The Jews who come from among their fellows to follow Christ and Paul must endure ostracism from members of their own race, sometimes cold suspicion and doubt from Gentiles with whom they seek the fellowship of a common faith in the Redeemer of us all. Yet those Jews who dare and accept such consequences do not falter. Earnestly, prayerfully, hopefully, they continue to appeal to the Gentiles to whom valiant Jews bore the gospel and the truth to help now give gospel and truth to the race and people of the first apostles, disciples, saints, and martyrs.

The Jews through all stress of persecution, poverty, struggle, and divergent fortune, have maintained their racial integrity, held fast to their belief in Jehovah and worship of him, continued to look with weary, longing souls, but never wavering faith, for the promised Messiah. The lowly trader, bargaining anxiously for a cast-off garment, his brain calculating the few pennies of possible profit, and the lordly banker studying the investment of millions, alike remember that they are Jews, like St. Paul give the Jew first place in their hearts, retain the same reverence for the God of Israel.

Surely in such a people there is a vast mine of spiritual wealth, of power for the establishment of the Kingdom of God and the advancement and elevation of mankind, which should not be left to go to waste or to be applied for disaster. In the United States, at least, the stability of the Jew in his own religion is shaken now. Constant contact with Christian civilization, wider education, widening thought, and forced compliance with Christian laws and customs, active participation in duties of citizenship, combine to rouse the mind of the intelligent class of Jews to doubt the infallibility of the system and theories and doctrines to which they were bred. Less intelligent and responsible classes learn to scoff at the synagogue and its teachings and ritual and draw away, too often, to crime. The devout, earnest, pious Jew, living by the Talmud and led by the rabbi, is disappearing. The orthodox, governed by the established methods of their creed and race, have become a small, steadily decreasing minority. Many thousands discard the Talmud and have no guidance to the Bible. For lack of helpful, kindly advice and instruction they become victims of rationalism and materialism, rebound viciously from the reverence they inherit and to which they were trained in the

old countries, to gross irreverence, belief in nothing, hope for nothing.

The Christians of the country are forced by the facts to face a crisis and decide how they shall meet and deal with it. The question is whether the minds of the Jews shall be drawn to Christ or left to drift into chaos.

The time is ripe. Breaking away from precedent, rabbis are preaching in their synagogues of Jesus, not conceding his divinity, but extolling the beauty and wisdom of his life and teaching.

The Jew is with us, a part of us, everywhere in the land, in all stations of life and avocation, increasing in numbers, gaining in strength every year. He is poised and doubting. He worships our God. Surely there can be no better or nobler, no more important or pressing work than to convince this vast mass of spiritual, intelligent, commercial, numerical strength that the Messiah looked for so dimly and so long really has come, and is a real, present Redeemer and Deliverer. The Jew is our fellow worshiper, fellow citizen. He can be made, should now be made, our brother Christian.—Condensed from an Article in The Living Church, by B. A. M. Schapiro.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. The responsibility of unbelief.

2. The responsibility of stirring up others.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lession. 1. Compare Paul's words to the idolaters at Lystra with what he said to the idolaters at Athens (chapter 17): what are the similarities and what the differences, and why? 2. Explain the sudden change of attitude of the people of Lystra toward the apostles. 3. Why was it wise for Paul to leave Lystra at once? 4. Why was it courageous for him to return to Lystra? 5. Read Ephesians 6.10-20, and explain why these verses have been included in our entire lesson text.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

OPENING A NEW FIELD

Beginning the Lesson. If you had been in their company that day when Paul and Barnabas and John Mark reached Perga, you would have been interested in a warm discussion which took place. Paul and Barnabas were stating what they should do next. In preaching throughout the island of Cyprus, whence they had just come, they found the Jews everywhere antagonistic while many Gentiles had heard their message eagerly.

Perhaps John Mark maintained that the Church at Antioch in Syria had sent them out to preach the gospel to their brethren, the Jews. Paul was inclined, and Barnabas agreed with him, from now on to be more concerned with the Gentiles. Perhaps John Mark was in favor of continuing their journey by boat to the great coast cities where they would find many Jews, but the two great leaders were beginning to think that it was God's purpose to have them undertake a definite mission to the Gentiles, and they decided to go over the Taurus Mountains into Galatia. John Mark left and returned to Jerusalem. We do not know the reason of his desertion, but we know that it offended Paul and on their next journey he refused to try him again, as Barnabas wished. Perhaps Mark was unable at this time to overcome his Jewish narrowness and prejudices.

How Paul Entered a New Field. Paul and Barnabas had been told of the perils of robbers which awaited them. Pisidia, whither they were bound, was a barbarous country, "almost destitute of Greek culture and barely subjugated by Roman arms." The trip would occupy about eight days. Would they meet any bandits on the mountain passes? Some scholars think that the dread of privations and the fear of robbers were the causes of John Mark's desertion at Perga.

When Ananias had hesitated to go to Paul in his blindness at Damascus, the word of the Lord had come to him saying, "Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel," and we may well suppose that he told Paul of this, and that now as Paul toilsomely climbed up the steep mountain pathway these words would repeat themselves over and over in his mind. How should he present his message to the Gentiles at Antioch in Pisidia? How could he reconcile this seeking out of the Gentiles with Jewish faith and practice? What would

their brethren in the home church say? And what would the Jews do if they turned to the Gentiles?

The last question proved to be the real issue at Antioch. How did it all turn out? (Explanations and Comments.)

Lo, We Turn to the Gentiles. In the Scientific Institute of New York there is a remarkable diamond. For a hundred days this diamond had been under the revolutions of a grinding wheel that was revolving so rapidly it traversed in that time a distance equal to three times the distance around the globe! The wheel was working, moreover, under a weight of forty pounds instead of the customary two pounds, and yet it could make no impression upon the diamond. The lapidary was exhausted, but the diamond was uncut. Nothing could be done with it, for a diamond in the rough has no beauty, and the jeweler sent it to the Institute as a curiosity.

Like this refractory diamond were the Jews of Christ's day and Paul's. One who reads the Gospels and the Book of The Acts continuously, paying heed to the pressure that was brought to bear on the Jews to accept Jesus as the Christ, and seeing them reject him again and again, must feel that the task was a hopeless one. This belief came to Paul at Antioch in Pisidia. Here he made his resolve that henceforth, though he would still offer the gospel to the Jews first in whatever city he went, his main effort should be for the Gentiles, the diamonds in the rough that would not resist the shaping hand of God.

Experiences Similar to Paul's. In a mission to the Chinese of one of our great cities two young Chinese came some years ago, and, after months of patient waiting, gave evidence that they had learned "the true doctrine" and became followers of Jesus Christ. Soon afterwards one of them went back to China. He carried with him some Chinese New Testaments and tracts, and after he reached his old home he invited the young men of the village to come to his house to study the Bible. They came willingly enough, but when they realized that he was teaching them the "Jesus religion" they left him quickly and reviled him bitterly. Then he began to gather the people on the streets to tell them the gospel story. They had never heard it before, he was the only Christian in all the district, and they might have listened gladly, but the old men said, "No! We cannot have this Western religion brought here," and they began to persecute him. Many times he was stoned, beaten, spit upon. Once the villagers threatened to burn down his house. Yet none of these things moved him. He continued to teach wherever and whenever he could, and gradually his gentle life won them. Slowly they began to listen to him, and one day the young men came back and asked him to start the class for them again.

All of this he wrote to his friend in Washington, D. C., and the heart of that young man burned within him. He knew how those villagers needed to hear the gospel story, he knew what their heathenism meant. He was only a poor laundryman, spending twelve and fourteen weary hours each day over the tub and ironing-board, yet he wrote to his friend begging him to give up all other work and devote all of his time to telling the people of the village of the salvation of Jesus Christ. "If you will do this," he wrote, "I will stay here and run the laundry, and send you money every year to pay your expenses."—Missionary Comments.

Sentence Sermons. We are daily judging ourselves unworthy of divine grace in every act of refusal to accept and rely on it.—Lyman Abbott.

> Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,
> Not light them for themselves: for if our virtues
> Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
> As if we had them not.—Shakespeare.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the entire Fourteenth Chapter of The Acts. 2. Who were Jupiter and Mercury? 3. Why did they call Barnabas rather than Paul, Jupiter? 4. Why did not the apostles understand what the people were saying? 5. What qualities does Paul display in our text? 6. What prominent helper of Paul later came from Lystra? (Acts 16.1.) 7. What did Paul write to him about his experiences at this time? (2 Tim. 3.10-12.) 8. Trace on the map Paul's first missionary journey from Syrian Antioch to Derbe and back.

LESSON XI—SEPTEMBER 13

SOME MISSIONARY EXPERIENCES

GOLDEN TEXT: Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5.10

LESSON Acts 14; Ephesians 6.10-20 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 50.4-9

ACTS 14.8 And at Lystra there sat a certain man, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked. 9 The same heard Paul speaking: who, fastening his eyes upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be made whole, 10 said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped up and walked. 11 And when the multitude saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voice, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. 12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercury, because he was the chief speaker. 13 And the priest of Jupiter whose "temple" was before the city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the multitudes. 14 But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they rent their garments, and sprang forth among the multitude, crying out 15 and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: 16 who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways. 17 And yet he left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness. 18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the multitudes from doing sacrifice unto them.

19 But there came Jews thither from Antioch and Iconium: and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. 20 But as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and entered into the city: and on the morrow he went forth with Barnabas to Derbe. 21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch, 22 confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. 23 And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. Gentiles and Jews together Attempt to Stone Paul and Barnabas at Iconium, verses 1-7.

II. Paul Cures a Cripple at Lystra, verses 8.11. There is no mention of a synagogue here at Lystra; probably there was none, the Jews not being very numerous. Seeking a place of public resort where they might preach, Paul and Barnabas probably chose the marketplace. Here was a cripple who, in all likelihood, was brought each day by his friends and left at the same place to beg, just as the lame man cured by Peter was left at the Gate Beautiful, Acts 3.2. Professor Ramsay notes the marked emphasis put upon this man's physical incapacity—"impotent in his feet," "a cripple from his mother's womb," "who never had walked," the three phrases which, like the beats of a hammer, compel the reader's attention.

This cripple heard Paul speak. The tense of the verb in Greek suggests repeatedly: on several occasions Paul had preached and the cripple near by had listened and had come to accept the truth. It may be that Paul told how Christ had performed many wonderful cures in other places, and the hope thus aroused in the cripple's heart began to manifest itself in his face so that Paul, fastening his eyes upon him and seeing that he had faith to be made whole, stopped his sermon to say, with a loud voice, "Stand upright on thy feet." The cripple leaped up and walked.

III. Hailed as God, verses 11-13. This miracle of healing electrified the whole city. Some one raised the cry, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men," and it was taken up by the crowd, and repeated in their native dialect, the speech of Lycaonia. And they called Paul Mercury, and,

probably because of his more commanding presence, they called Barnabas Jupiter.

How easily outward appearances may belie inward facts is portrayed by the way these Lycaonians estimated Paul and Barnabas. Barnabas was hailed as the leading god, for Paul, according to the description in The Acts of Paul and Thekla was "small in size, baldheaded, bandy-legged, stout, but full of grace, for sometimes he seemed like a man and sometimes like an angel." Paul, in 2 Cor. 10.10 quotes his enemies as saying of him, "His bodily presence is weak, and his speech is of no account." But Paul, outward appearances notwithstanding, was the real Jupiter of the Christian ideal.

Before Paul and Barnabas realized what was happening, not understanding the language of Lycaonia, they were being offered divine honors and preparations were under way to worship them as gods. Before long the priest who officiated in the temple of Jupiter outside the city gate brought oxen and garlands "into the gates," the snow-white oxen which were kept near by ready for sacrifice. It is thought that the gates were not those of the city but of the porch or entrance of the house where the apostles were lodging. Perhaps a temporary altar had been hastily erected at the entrance of the court in order that the sacrifice might be offered in the presence of the supposed gods. The garlands may have hung upon the oxen or may have been brought to bedeck the apostles or the new-built altar. "The incident is significant because it reveals the impressions of both these men. It was because they made such an impression by their personality as well as by the miracle, that the pagans were so ready to ascribe deity to them."

"To accept the popular tribute of being more than a man has wrecked many a good career, but it has never yet produced a superman" (Henry van Dyke).

IV. The Multitude Restrained from their Purpose, verses 14-18. It may have been the singing of the worshipers gathering before their abode that brought Paul and Barnabas forth. As soon as they became aware of the purpose of the crowd, "horror-stricken, and with garments rent to show by sign as well as by words their repudiation of such worship, they sprang into the midst of the crowd that they might put an end to the delusion of the people."

"Men!" they now cried (as Moffatt's translation forcibly expresses it), "what is this you are doing? We are but human—with natures like your own. The gospel which we are preaching to you is to turn from such futile ways, to the living God!" Then Paul preached his first recorded sermon to pagans.

V. The Attempt to Kill Paul, verses 19, 20. This incident did not help the work of Paul. "The people went home shamefaced, feeling that they had made fools of themselves. Their mood was a hotbed for suspicion. If these men were not gods, then they healed the cripple by the power of the Evil One."

News had reached the jealous Jews of Pisidian Antioch who had driven the apostles from their city, that they were preaching at Lystra. With other hostile Jews from Iconium they came to Lystra and easily persuaded the people there to turn against Paul.

"In the very bitterness that often marks the persecuting spirit today is to be seen, not an excess of zeal for the truth and the right, but rather something of the exactly opposite nature. And when a man finds himself easily stirred up into a fury against some teaching or philosophy of faith different from his own, he ought not to set it down to his credit, for it generally deserves anything except that."

The fickle crowd proceeded to stone Paul and to drag him outside the city, supposing him to be dead. In the catalog of his sufferings which Paul gives in 2 Cor. 11.25, he says, "once I was stoned," and it may be that among "the marks of the Lord Jesus" which he bore in his body (Gal. 6.17) were the scars left by this attack. As the disciples stood around the unconscious Paul—his

work had not been in vain, after all, for there were Christian disciples now in Lystra, Christians brave enough to defend him—Paul arose and went back into the city. His ability even to stand, after such cruel stoning, seems quite as much a miracle as had the cripple's standing on his feet. He was able the next day to go on with Barnabas to Derbe, several hours distant.

VI. Organizing the Churches, verses 21-23. During his stay in Derbe many disciples were won. The apostles began to think about their return home. At Derbe they were not far from Tarsus. The well-known and much traveled pass called the "Cilician Gates" which led down from the Lycaonian plateau through the Tauras Mountains to the coast plain where lay Tarsus was easily accessible. And around the bend of the Mediterranean from Tarsus was Antioch in Syria, Paul's headquarters. The apostles must have wished to go home. They had been absent now nearly a year, and persecutions and the rigors of travel must have heavily drained their physical strength. Yet they did not push on to the east and home, but turned back and again visited Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia.

> "To the place where he was stoned and dragged out of the city because it was believed he was dead, Paul returned for the sake of the Christ and those for whom he died. This reveals the sacrificial secret of success. It lays bare the passion for souls that issues in the power for persistence. We say, 'I tried once and was rebuffed.' 'I asked my friend to come to church and he wasn't enthusiastic about it, so I didn't ask him again.' Some one in the church says something we do not like, so we take offense and give up all our work there for Christ" (F. J. Miles).

On this return trip the apostles were not so intent on making new disciples as on training those who already believed and in organizing them, with proper leadership, into permanent churches. Everywhere they sought to confirm the souls of the disciples and exhorted them to continue in the faith, telling them that "through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God." Already the antagonism which had blocked the work of the apostles and had led to persecution, was making itself felt in the lives of these disciples. Trench says that "a single word is often a concentrated poem, a little grain of gold, capable of being beaten out into a broad extent of gold leaf." Such a word is "tribulation," derived from "tribulum," the Roman threshing sledge whereby the Latin farmer separated the grain from the husks.

VII. The Return to Antioch of Syria and the Report, verses 24-28.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The gods are come down to us, verse 11. Egyptians and Greeks believed that the gods often assumed human bodies and visited the earth, to reward the good and punish the evil. Homer, Virgil and Ovid record many such visits. To quote from Homer (Cowper's translation):

> "For, in similitude of strangers, oft
> The gods, who can with ease all shapes assume,
> Repair to populous cities, where they mark
> The outrageous, and the righteous deeds of men."

According to mythology, Jupiter and Mercury had twice come to this very country of Lycaonia, the best known story being that of Baucis and Philemon. This poor couple, the only persons who welcomed the gods with hospitality in the story, were richly rewarded: it was ordained that neither should survive the other's death, and thus neither should know the sorrow of mourning.

He gave you from heaven rains, verse 17. Professor Ramsay gives us the interesting information that to the present day in Paul's own Asia Minor a bounteous spring, flowing from the rock or the earth and transforming the ground through which it flows from a gray desert into a fruitful garden, is called by those who enjoy its benefits "Hudaverdi," God-has-given.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

"In Pisidian Antioch," writes Professor Ramsay, "the expulsion was produced by magisterial action; in Iconium it was brought about by mob violence,

for it may be assumed that the attempt at stoning the apostles came from the lower classes under Jewish instigation. One sees how well the difference corresponds to the contrasted character of the two cities, one governed by a Roman aristocracy, the other by a Hellenic body of citizens."

Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe were all cities of Galatia, the Roman province which extended from north to south across the great central plateau of Asia Minor; the two former were in the district of Phrygia, and the two latter in the district of Lycaonia. Lycaonia means "The Land of the Wolves"; the plain was wild and dreary.

Jupiter and Mercury

Iconium (now Konieh) lay about ninety miles southeast of Pisidian Antioch and beyond the jurisdiction of the local authorities of Antioch; the journey would take Paul and Barnabas three or four days. Iconium was on a branch of the great Royal Road running between Antioch and Lystra.

Lystra, about eighteen miles southwest of Iconium, was a small garrison city at which the Royal Road ended. Like Antioch it was a Roman colony. In its population were a few Romans who formed the local aristocracy, and a few Greeks and Jews, but most of the inhabitants were comparatively barbarous subjects of Rome whose language was a dialect of their own. In the other cities traversed, Paul addressed people who had shared to some degree in Greek education.

Derbe lay isolated on the southeastern edge of the Lycaonian plain. The lofty, snow-clad, conical peak of the Taurus Mountains, eight thousand feet in height, kept guard above the city on the south.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Paul, fastening his eyes upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be made whole, said: as soon as Paul saw the man's faith he stopped and healed him. The word challenges every teacher. How much does the teacher perceive in the faces turned to his? Does he discern just the moment when this or that youth is beginning to see? Surely the measure in which the teacher is Christ's mouthpiece will be the measure of his sympathy with his hearers. That is the fundamental virtue of the teacher. Without it his psychology is dead and his theology, only words.—Emily Huntley.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

CHRISTIANITY FACING OTHER RELIGIONS

Beginning the Lesson. Paul had a double task to perform as the church's first great missionary. He had to interpret Christianity in its relation both to Judaism and also to the pagan religious cults.

Christianity was face to face with Judaism at the very start. But the first believers, including the apostles, did not realize that there was a problem here. For years they continued to practice their Judaism and at the same time counted themselves Christians. They attended the synagogues and temple services and their own Christian gatherings as well. If any Gentiles united with the church in Jerusalem it was as proselytes who had already accepted Judaism. It was not until Gentiles began to accept Christianity in large numbers that the Jews became conscious of any incongruity in a person maintaining his relationship to both Judaism and Christianity.

In Lystra Paul had his first skirmish with a pagan religion. (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

Persecution only Increased Paul's Zeal. A strange story was told in the Boston Herald some time ago about the freighter Hardy, coming from a port in France, carrying, besides the mineral water in her hold, a number of small wooden cases marked "metallic sodium." The story is long and interesting. Suffice it to say that these cases were the cause of a fire that could not be put out. Several of the cases of mineral water had broken, and suddenly the boatswain saw one of the wooden cases marked "sodium" burst

into flames. The more water they poured on the fire, the more intense was the flame. Cases were cast into the sea, only to rebound into the air, flaming balls. The crew had barely time to take to the boats when the freighter broke in two and disappeared in the sea. Captain and crew learned then that sodium is a metal of a peculiar quality. It oxidizes rapidly when water touches it and bursts into flames as soon as the water becomes warm. Water thrown on it to quench it has the contrary effect. It is a fit emblem of enthusiasm like Paul's, which has also a "peculiar quality." There was no use throwing cold water on his enthusiasm. One might throw him into a sea of troubles, but he rebounded and burst into a hotter flame of zeal than ever. Persecution was only so much fuel to the fire.—Anna Burnham Bryant, in The Pilgrim Teacher.

The Futility of Other Religions. Any consideration of the great non-Christian religions, even a most casual one, leaves the student of these religions touched by the splendor and the pathos of man's age-long search for God. Whether one thinks of the great souls in whom the divine flame has burned most brightly; or of the innumerable multitudes who have lifted their eyes to the heavens and believed after some manner in a God; one cannot resist the impression that man's nature longs for the Divine and will never cease from the quest until it is satisfied. "Thou hast made us for thyself, and our heart is restless until it rests in thee."

Yet it would be foolish to pretend that every man who professes Hinduism or Islam or Buddhism is an earnest seeker after God, longing only for the true revelation to be vouchsafed to him. In masses of the adherents of each of these systems little is to be found but a degraded idolatry, depraved morals and a timorous cult of spirits. Yet we should judge the religions not by their worst but by their best, and we cannot deny that they do contain within them proof of the lofty heights to which the soul can rise in its effort to attain to God. But when we have made this frank acknowledgment, does it not remain true that these religions have all failed? What kind of God have they given men in the end? The primitive man gets but little beyond the thought of a capricious spirit-god; Islam shows God to be One, Creator and King, but not Holy, and not a God with whom man can have fellowship; Hinduism wavers between the thought of an impersonal world-spirit and of a personal but limited Deity; Gautama the Buddha faced the sorrow of life alone, and came to men with the gospel of the extinction of desire—a poor substitute for God; China for so many years has lived in doubt and obscurity regarding God; Japan has reached to a conception of the divine love, lofty indeed, but based only on a myth which advancing knowledge will assuredly sweep away. It is a picture full of broken lights; nowhere does there shine out the clear radiance of a perfect faith. God has not left himself without witness, but in his real nature he has never been revealed.—Jesus Christ and the Word's Religions.

There is only One Main Thoroughfare to God. There are various other trails Godward. Along those trails people in all ages have come near enough to discover something of the divine nature. Along those paths certain great strong souls have come near enough to get very noble conceptions of God. But along those roads no nation has ever been able to move in a great social advance toward a Kingdom of God. The travelers by those trails have never caught the full glory of God. It was not until Jesus of Nazareth came as "the way, the truth, and the life" that humanity had a perfectly improved through road into the Divine Presence.

The acid test of a good highway is bad weather. A few weeks ago I was giving some addresses in a Kansas town. The plan for my departure was to drive me some sixteen miles to a junction of a trunk line railroad. Between my town and that junction point was a fairly good looking clay road. The night before my leaving a heavy rain fell. The result was that I did not drive. The clay road was impassable. Good enough in fair weather, it was almost useless in foul weather. If that had been one of our modern improved automobile thoroughfares, rain and storm would not have stopped me. The superiority of the road Christ made between man and God is best seen in life's bad weather. When the storms of calamity come and the rains of trouble

fall, the other Godward trails that men follow become very difficult. In such times it is most clearly seen that "No man cometh unto the Father" but by "the way, the truth, and the life" of Jesus Christ.—Ralph W. Sockman.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. Do you agree with Principal Mackenzie of Bombay who declares that he would rather have a man who bows down before a daub of red paint or a stone than a man who has nothing but materialism and is satisfied with it?

2. A consideration of some objections to the missionary enterprise. See Chapter V of The Missionary Idea in Life and Religion, by J. M. McFadyen.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How had Peter been obliged to justify before his brethren in the church at Jerusalem his work among Gentiles? 2. Just what was the problem facing the Council at Jerusalem? 3. How did the decision of the Council show wisdom? 4. If the decision of the Council was a compromise, did Paul surrender any of his principles? 5. What would have been the result had the Council upheld the men who made the trouble at Antioch? 6. Why was John Huss burned at the stake, Savonarola hanged in the public square of Florence, Latimer and Ridley at Oxford? 7. May others be good Christians who do not hold all the doctrines which you hold?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HARDSHIPS OF MISSIONARIES

Beginning the Lesson. In his book entitled, In the Footsteps of Saint Paul, Dr. Francis E. Clarke has an interesting account of his visit to Khatun Serai, the modern Lystra. "We found the inhabitants still less hospitable than in Paul's time," he writes. "Doubtless a stranger in these days is a far greater rarity than in ancient times. Prying faces were thrust behind the curtains of our arabas (wagons) to look at the strange women from America, with their unveiled faces. The mudir, or head man, of the hamlet was among the first arrivals in the motley crowd that surrounded the arabas. In return to a polite request that he would direct us to the ruins of the ancient city, he gave a prompt and curt refusal. The boys and young men, taking their cue from the head man, began to revile us as 'Giaours' or 'Christian dogs.' But soon they found out that one of our company was a missionary doctor; then their whole attitude changed, for there were many diseased people in the little village, and to them the coming of a skilled physician from America, whose fame had already spread to this little hamlet, gave promise of health and life. This sudden change, gratifying as it was to the cold and weary travelers, showed that the character of the Lystrian for fickleness had not changed with the changing centuries."

What were Paul's experiences at Lystra?

The Mission of a Modern Prometheus. In the mysterious Greek legend of Prometheus, the hero who sacrificed his place among the Olympians and incurred the anger of Zeus, that he might bring to the primeval cave-dwellers the gift of fire, from which all arts were to spring, we have a striking figure of the Christian missionary. He has ever in his ears the saying of his Master, "I am come to cast fire on the earth," and he carries a spark of it in his breast to the darkest regions of the world, where he has to guard it sedulously from all the powers of evil that are leagued for its extinction.

For this he must be willing to sever the tenderest ties, to mortify ambition, to forego opportunities of culture, and to live misunderstood in deadly climates. What others undergo for gain or glory, he must brave for a wholly spiritual object, the kindling of new life in the grossest and earthliest types of humanity.—From Missionary Crusaders.

Christianity Facing our English Ancestors. Twelve hundred and fifty years ago a man named Wilfrid sailed along the south coast of a great island in the North Seas. With him in the ship were a hundred and twenty companions. In a great storm the ship was being carried nearer and nearer to the coast. All on board could now see the men of the Shingle Beach waving their spears and axes. The current and the wind swung the ship still closer to the shore, and now—even above the whistle of the gale in the cordage—the crew heard the wild whoop of the wreckers. These men on the beach were the sons

of pirates. But they were now cowards compared with their fathers. For they no longer lived by the wild sea-rover's fight that had made their fathers' blood leap with the joy of the battle. They lived by a crueler craft. Waiting till some such vessel as this was swept ashore, they would swoop down on it, harry and slay the men, carry the women and children off for slaves, break up the ship and take the wood and stores for fire and food. They were beach-combers.

Their attack upon the ship was finally repulsed and they withdrew baffled and sullen.

Some years passed by, yet Wilfrid in all his travels had never forgotten the men of the Beach. And, strangely enough, he wanted to go back to them. At last the time came when he could do so. This time he did not visit them by sea. After he had preached among the people in a distant part of the same great island, Wilfrid with four faithful companions—Eappa, Padda, Burghelm and Oiddi—walked down to the south coast of the island. As he came to the tribe he found many of them gathered on the beach as before. But the fierceness was gone. They tottered with weakness as they walked. The very bones seemed ready to come through their skin. They were starving with hunger and thirst from a long drought, when no grain or food of any kind would grow. And now they were gathered on the shore, and a long row of them linked hand in hand would rush down the very beach upon which they had attacked Wilfrid and would cast themselves into the sea to get out of the awful agonies of their hunger.

"Are there not fish in the sea for food?" asked Wilfrid. "Yes, but we cannot catch them," they answered. Wilfrid showed the wondering men of the Shingle Beach how to make large nets and then launched out in the little boats that they owned, and let the nets down. For hour after hour Wilfrid and his companions fished, while the savages watched them from the beach with hungry eyes as the silver-shining fish were drawn gleaming and struggling into the boats. At last, as evening drew on, the nets were drawn in for the last time, and Wilfrid came back to the beach with hundreds of fish in the boats. With eager joy the men of the Beach lighted fires and cooked the fish. Their hunger was stayed: the rain for which Wilfrid prayed came. They were happy once more.

Now, those savages were the great-, great-, great-grandfathers and mothers of the English-speaking peoples of the world. The North Sea Island was Britain; the beach was near Chichester on the South Coast. And today you and I enjoy in our homes our books and sports and schools, because men like Wilfrid and St. Patrick, St. Columba and St. Ninian, St. Augustine and others in the days of long ago came to lift our fathers from the wretched, quarrelsome life, and from the starving helplessness of the men of the Shingle Beach. The people of the North Sea Islands and of America and the rest of the Christian world have these good things in their life because there came to save our forefathers heroic missionaries like Wilfrid, Columba and Augustine.—Condensed from The Book of Missionary Heroes.

The Hardships of Livingstone. With his own right hand Livingstone built three houses, dug water-courses for his African villages, healed their bodies and lifted their feet from the clay, was felled by the lion from which he was delivering his friends, and went maimed all his days with a fractured arm and eleven great lion tooth-marks on his shoulder.

Over veldt and desert, through swamp and march, the hero-scout of Christ and empire met his adventures among wild beasts and savage men, in perilous journeys, in wagon and by canoe, on ox-back and on foot, along the rivers and through the tangled forests of Africa where no white man had ever been before.

He faced howling savages and converted them to friends, sawed the slave-sticks from the necks of rescued slaves and penetrated to those hidden beauties of nature and horrors of inhumanity which make the narrative of those marvelous journeys of African exploration one of the most majestic and moving epics in authentic human story.

With that "forward tread" which meant "getting there," he struggled on against increasing weakness, often with bleeding feet, bearing on his bent shoulders the cross of Africa—slavery. The gleam of the fellowship with

Stanley shone out momentarily, and then flickered out as he turned back alone to face the end.

Then he was borne to that hut at Ilala. There, in late hours of the night, by the dim light of the flickering candle, the awed and whispering companions saw the bowed form of their master kneeling by the bedside, his head buried in his hands on the pillow.

The forerunner of Christ in Africa had crossed his last river—in prayer for Africa. When at last he was laid to rest in the "forest of stone"—Westminster Abbey—that story of his fight for slavery was told.—Basil Mathews.

Hardships of Missionaries Today. Even today missionaries occasionally meet with physical perils and privations not unlike those which Paul met at Lystra and Iconium and Derbe, of which he may have been thinking when he wrote Second Corinthians 11.23-33.

Many missionaries who were compelled to flee from China in the recent years of internal chaos left behind them looted homes, ravaged fields, spoiled churches. But there were also left little bands of frightened and scattered Christians, who sorely needed their presence and help. Within a year hundreds of missionaries set their faces to go back to their Lystras.

However, not many missionaries today would admit that they endure any hardships. While it is true that conditions of travel, of living and of social relationships are vastly improved over the days when the missionary often found the journey to his field of service fraught with great perils both to health and to life and limb, and then had to settle in the midst of people bitterly hostile and unresponsive, yet the modern missionary does inevitably face hardships of various sorts. The hardships which are the most severe are those connected with the trying separation from their children, who have to be sent to the homeland for their education; with the separation from other loved relations and friends at home, with the continuing strain of the feeling of isolation. Can you name others?

Christianity is "Non-Downable." A group of Chinese came one day to the editor's residence all aglow from the interchange of reports. And these reports covered the year of the most anti-Christian persecution that China has seen for a long time! "We can plainly see," said they, "that Christianity is non-downable!" Then they added, "We have come to call Christianity the Bu Tao Wung!"

The Bu Tao Wung is the Chinese term for the little dolls which are filled with lead at the bottom and always bob up when knocked over. A very heartening thing it must have been for those Chinese leaders to hear the same story of inner victory come from every part of their great land. Their experience has been that of Paul and the rest of the early Christians: pressed on every side, but not overcome. One of the Chinese friends said: "All of these reports can be summed up in one sentence. The past year has been one of persecutions and there has been some external loss, but, on the other hand, great inward gain."

And just so it has always been with the Christian enterprise, no matter in what clime or at what time. With the Christian, business is always good! Indeed, the Christian's business, his real business, is usually best when times are worst. Christianity grows brightest and grows fastest when it is hammered and pounded most.—Editorial in The China Christian Advocate.

Sentence Sermons.

Not in the clamor of the crowded street,
Not in the shouts and plaudits of the throng,
But in ourselves are triumph and defeat (Longfellow).

"If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small"—too small to be worth talking about, for the day of adversity is its first real opportunity. —Maltbie D. Babcock.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why was there a Council held at Jerusalem? 2. Why was Paul intensely interested in its outcome? 3. How did Peter learn that God makes no distinction between Gentiles and Jews? 4. What did Peter say at the Jerusalem Council? 5. What did James say? 6. What was the decision? 7. What is a good way to settle disputes? 8. Should one refrain from doing some things not wrong in themselves for the sake of peace and harmony with others? 9. Why did the Pilgrim Fathers come to America?

LESSON XII—SEPTEMBER 20

THE COUNCIL IN JERUSALEM

GOLDEN TEXT: For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another. Galatians 5.13

LESSON Acts 15.1-35; Galatians 2 DEVOTIONAL READING Romans 8.1-10

ACTS 15.22 Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men out of their company, and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; "namely," Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: 23 and they wrote "thus" by them, The apostles and the elders, brethren, unto the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greeting: 24 Forasmuch as we have heard that certain who went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; to whom we gave no commandment; 25 it seemed good unto us, having come to one accord, to choose out men and send them unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26 men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who themselves also shall tell you the same things by word of mouth. 28 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: 29 that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you. Fare ye well.

GALATIANS 2.1 Then after the space of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus also with me. 2 And I went up by revelation; and I laid before them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles but privately before them who were of repute, lest by any means I should be running, or had run, in vain.

9 And when they perceived the grace that was given unto me, James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision; 10 only "they would" that we should remember the poor; which very thing I was also zealous to do.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. Judaizing Teachers from Jerusalem Stir up Trouble at Antioch of Syria, Acts 15.1.

II. A Deputation Sent from the Church at Antioch to Jerusalem, Acts 15.2, 3.

III. The Conference at Jerusalem and Peter's Speech, Acts 15.4-11.

IV. Paul's Report of the Work among the Gentiles and the Speech of James, Acts 15.12-21.

V. A Deputation sent from Jerusalem to the Church at Antioch, Acts 15.22. When certain men came from Judea and taught the brethren at Antioch that they could not be saved unless circumcised after the manner of Moses, it became evident that the whole question of Gentile Christianity must be settled once for all and settled speedily.

"Before you criticize these Judaizing Jews, it might be as well to remember that, in a way, you are one of them. You and I have our own little familiar world of ideas and habits in which we are happily at home; and when anything looms up on our horizon, we quickly become apprehensive for the stability of our world. If the new thing is too stubborn to be ignored, we try to draw its teeth, to tame it into conformity with our own habit, which is precisely what these early Christians were trying to do. And this much is to be said for them and for us—that the past contains elements of abiding worth which it is our business to preserve, whatever other changes the passing years may compel us to make in the structure of our house of life. It is only the fool that treats tradition as so much junk, or supposes that the experience of our forefathers contains no wisdom for us. None the less, time does make ancient good uncouth. Between the folly of despising tradition and the folly of being enslaved by tradition, there is not much to choose. One task is to build the future: but to build it, not with the past, but upon it. And the proper treatment of tradition is neither to discard it nor to let it lord it over us, but to carry it along

with us and make it yield up whatever wisdom it may have for our wayfaring" (Richard Roberts).

The church appointed Paul and Barnabas and others (among them Titus, Gal. 2.1) to go to Jerusalem and work out the problem in consultation with the apostles and elders. Read the first twenty-one verses of our chapter. The Council selected two of its outstanding men, Judas and Silas, to return with Paul and Barnabas and deliver its decision to the church at Antioch. "Judas called Barsabbas" may have been brother to "Joseph called Barsabbas," candidate with Mathias as successor to Judas Iscariot (Acts 1.23). Silas became Paul's companion on his Second Missionary Journey, and in the next three chapters of The Acts he is frequently mentioned.

VI. The Earliest Formal and Official Document Issued by the Christian Church, Acts 15.23-29. With the delegation a letter was sent, directed to "The Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia." The churches founded by Paul on his first missionary tour are not mentioned, either because they were comparatively unaffected as yet, or because the fewness of the Jews in those centers made it unnecessary to accentuate any restrictions.

The letter wholly repudiated the teaching of the Judaizers to whom the church at Jerusalem had given no commandment to declare that Gentiles must be circumcised and keep the law. They did not have any authority at all from the apostles when they were thus troubling the church at Antioch with these words and so "subverting their souls." The word "subverting" literally means the entire removal of goods and chattels, to pack up baggage and carry off, to dismantle. It expresses with striking pictorial strength the idea that these false teachers were taking away from the Gentile converts their entire possession in Christ. As Paul says in Galatians 2.4, "They came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage."

The letter next refers to "our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," and declares that with them they have chosen two others, Judas and Silas, who would give them the same report. They had come to an agreement and it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to them to lay upon the Gentile churches no greater burden than these necessary things—"necessary not in the sense of essential to salvation, but in the sense that some consideration should be given by Gentile believers to Jewish prejudices." If free and cordial social intercourse was to take place between Jewish and Gentile Christians, especially at the Lord's table, some voluntary abstinence such as these restrictions suggested seemed imperative.

The four things from which they were counseled to abstain—meats offered to idols, things strangled, blood, and fornication, were great obstacles to friendly intercourse between Jews and Gentiles. Bishop Lightfoot calls the decree "a temporary expedient for a temporary emergency." They were merely means of peace and good will during a period of transition. Just as soon as Jewish Christians became instructed and perceived that distinction between clean and unclean meats was abolished, the significance and value of the decree disappeared. As for Paul, the decree represented what has been called his "accommodating conduct." It did not compromise his basic principle of "liberty in Christ," and was merely an exhibition of his "yieldingness" in things unessential, for the sake of the weaker brethren, as he expressed it in his words to the Galatians which have been chosen for our Golden Text. "Mere externals mattered nothing in Paul's estimation. He would wear any vestments or take any position or use any ceremony, esteeming them all things indifferent provided only that they conciliated human prejudices and cleared difficulties out of the way of truth. But if a man insisted upon them as things necessary he opposed them with all his might. This is the golden thread which will rule our footsteps amid the mazes of this earliest Christian controversy" (George T. Stokes).

It should be the golden thread to guide us in our judgment of ideas, ideals and methods of others today. We should be anxious only that difficulties may be cleared out of the way of truth, and never concerned merely to maintain our particular ideas. "It is difficult to be resolute without being

obstinate. If you are compelled to differ from your companions, let it be in love! Let all observers see that you are not biased by selfish motives and have no objective but the cause of truth."

VII. The Favorable Reception of the Decision, Acts 15.30-35. Knowing, as they did, the Pharisaic element in the church at Jerusalem, not to say the bigotry of many of its members, the church at Antioch must have awaited the result of the conference with considerable anxiety. There was great rejoicing when the deputation arrived and the letter of the Council was read. The church at Jerusalem had yielded in what seemed to them a most important matter, the requirement of circumcision; the church at Antioch readily agreed, on their part, to abstain from things strangled and from food offered to idols. There was give and take on both sides.

"In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity."

Judas and Silas, after exhorting the church, returned to Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas remained at Antioch for some time, preaching and teaching the word of the Lord.

VIII. Paul's Version of the Council in Jerusalem, Galatians 2.1-10. It is generally believed that Galatians 2.1-10, written to the churches in Galatia which he founded on his first missionary journey, is Paul's version of what occurred at the Council. He writes that "after the space of fourteen years," (from his conversion, it is believed), he went to Jerusalem with Barnabas and Titus. The rest of his words are helpfully paraphrased by the One Volume Commentary:—

It was an impulse from the Spirit which led me to go and explain my teaching to the leaders there, that I might see whether they approved it. That they did so was shown by the fact that they did not demand the circumcision of my companion, Titus, Gentile though he was. Some, no doubt, desired it, but on account of the Judaizers, who were trying to bind the burdens of the law upon us, I utterly refused, because by allowing it I should have compromised the truth of the gospel. But the most influential leaders of the Jerusalem Church—let their authority be what it may, that does not concern the truth or divine approval of my teaching—had no desire to correct or supplement my views, but recognized that I had my sphere of labor among the Gentiles as truly as Peter had his among the Jews, and that each was successful in his own sphere. Not only so, but these leaders, James, Peter and John, gave us the right hand of fellowship in token of their approval and sympathy, and bade us God-speed in our foreign mission, while they themselves sought to evangelize the Jews, only asking us to send contributions for the poor at Jerusalem, which indeed we were eager to do.

Moffatt's translation of verse two makes the meaning clear: I submitted the gospel I am in the habit of preaching to the Gentiles, submitting it privately to the authorities, to make sure that my course of action would be and had been sound.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. These necessary things, Acts 15.28. The "necessary things" from which they were asked to abstain are four in number. The followers of Mohammed have laws given them as to what they must do in sixteen hundred different cases.

That ye abstain from things strangled, Acts 15.29. To eat blood, either as such or in things strangled, was not to the Jewish Christian a breach of ritual law. It was the mark of the beast. It was cardinally pagan. To them all, probably not least to Paul himself, there was an abiding horror in the thought. As truly as idolatry or fornication, it led back to darkness. It was impossible to expect any converted Jew to live in Christian amity with fellow-worshipers who engaged in so religiously shocking and indecent a practice.

Only the other day I met with interesting confirmation of this conclusion. In Christian communities drawn from heathenism, as in West Africa, the native Christian courts, while dealing severely with coarser sins, yet reserve their fiercest censure for reversion to idolatrous practices. Taking the oath in a law court by drinking the ordeal water, instead of swearing on the Bible,

or fulfilling the old custom of presenting the chief with game taken in hunting that he may offer part of it in sacrifice, or at weddings or funerals, accepting ancient heathen customs—all these are the most heinous sins. To the African these are not ritual questions, they go to the very root of faith.—Innes Logan, in Expository Times.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The opposition which Paul had met in preaching the gospel had, up until the time of the Council in Jerusalem, come from unbelieving Jews and from Gentiles whom the Jews stirred up. Now, from within the church itself he began to experience trouble. These Jerusalem Jews felt that they were contaminated by associating with Gentiles even if they were accepted Christians. The Gentiles did not purify themselves after the Mosaic manner, and they ate swine and other food which was unclean from the Jewish point of view. There was no little reluctance on the part of believing Jews in sharing in the Lord's Supper and in associating with their Gentile neighbors. Against these foes within the household of faith, Paul labored for the freedom of the Gentiles.

The Council held at Jerusalem repudiated them, but in a sense the struggle was not over. In fact, this Council in its results much resembled the Council of Nicæa, Mr. Rackham points out in his Commentary. "The great council of Nicæa met in 325 after the first outbreak of Arianism, and almost unanimously adopted the creed which excluded Arianism from the faith. But this was only the beginning of the struggle. After the Council the controversy grew more intense, the Church was nearly torn in two, and only after fifty years of fighting was the Nicene Creed generally accepted as the faith of the Church. So now after this Council at Jerusalem, the circumcision party renewed their efforts with greater zeal. Luke, however, is right in speaking of peace, because the struggle changed its character. The extreme party in its fanaticism became almost a separate 'sect' of 'Judaizers'; and their work was transformed into a personal attack on Paul. They recognized that 'the apostle of the Gentiles' was the great champion of Gentile liberty; and accordingly they dogged his footsteps, they disputed his teaching, they denied his apostolate. They sent emissaries even into his own Gentile churches to steal his converts away from him, and in many places they succeeded in stirring up scenes of strife such as had occurred at Antioch, and this with most disastrous effect in the churches of Galatia, which almost apostatized from Paul's gospel. We learn these facts chiefly from the letters of the third missionary journey—to the Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans."

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

How tactful is the letter which the Council at Jerusalem sent to the people at Antioch! Under the circumstances many things might have been said that would have aroused antagonism. The letter avoids all this, and yet says all that is essential. It disclaims authorizing those who had "subverted souls," and it gives Paul and Barnabas due meed of praise. "It seemed good to us to lay upon you no greater burden than"—how infinitely better is such a statement than words to the effect that we demand of you thus and so! Surely Paul had a hand in the wording of this letter, for again and again we see how tactful he was in dealing with others. Notice how often when compelled to reprove he begins by saying all that he can to cheer and encourage.

Epictetus has excellent advice along this line. "Every matter hath two handles: by the one it may be carried; by the other, not. If thy brother do thee wrong, take not this thing by the handle, he wrongs me; for that is the handle whereby it may not be carried. But take it rather by the handle, he is my brother, nourished with me; and thou wilt take it by a handle whereby it may be carried."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
CHRISTIANITY AT THE CROSSROADS

Beginning the Lesson. The things that God had done through Paul, which he rehearsed to the church at Jerusalem, were wonderful, but just as wonderful was the thing which God had done in Paul himself. He, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, trained in all the strictest laws of his nation, had become the most liberal of all the Jews; his mission was to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles,

and he was immovable in his determination to champion the cause of the Gentiles against all attacks.

For the stand taken by the church at Jerusalem in regard to the Gentiles there is much to be said. The rite of circumcision had been observed since the days of Abraham, and no law from God or from Christ had been voiced abrogating it. Jesus had proclaimed: "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy but to fulfil." Who, then, had authority to declare the rite unnecessary? To Peter had come a vision, and as a result the Gentile Cornelius and his household had been received into the church at Cæsarea, but the lesson had been quickly forgotten. What right had Paul to adopt his revolutionizing procedure and say that "Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing"?

Paul had the right of a revelation from God, a revelation shown, not by vision or by word of prophet, but by results that proved God's will and purpose. God had borne the Gentiles witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto the Jews; and he had made no distinction between Jews and Gentiles, cleansing their hearts by faith. God's will is shown in his ways with men as well as through his words to men. "Truth grafts itself on previous truth, modifying it in the process, just as idiom grafts itself on previous idiom, and law on previous law," says a great psychologist. On the truth as revealed to the nation of Israel is now grafted the truth as revealed to the Gentile nations, and in the process the new truth has modified the old.

The Bitterness of the Controversy. I suppose that when we first read The Acts of the Apostles, the fifteenth seemed rather a dull chapter. The discussion proceeds smoothly to its foregone conclusion. It is like a friendly action at law brought for the purpose of registering an authoritative declaration on a matter as to which both parties are already agreed. It is only when we have read the Epistle to the Galatians that we begin to realize what passions and prejudices had been stirred up, how bitter was the controversy, how intense the excitement, how uncertain the issue must for a long time have seemed. In the end James, Cephas and John gave to Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship. But for a considerable time it must have seemed to both sides well-nigh impossible that Paul and the senior apostles should remain members of the same church.—W. Bartlett, in Expository Times.

Christianity at the Crossroads in the Early Church. Paul had against him some, at least, of the original disciples, though we may believe that converts from the sect of the Pharisees formed the backbone of the party (Acts 15.5; 21.20). As far as the more moderate leaders are concerned, we can understand and respect their position. They were cautious in the presence of an untried venture. They saw, and perhaps report exaggerated, the perils of Paul's bold propaganda. Some of the language he used about freedom from law had a dangerous suggestion of anarchy. They did not know to what subversive doctrines he might commit the Christian movement. Moreover, they felt, and not unreasonably, that they were likely to know the mind of their Master better than this newcomer who had never heard him speak, and they could not think that he wished the door quite so widely opened. It is not the only time in history that the nearest followers of a great leader have failed to understand his secret, even while they died for his cause.

Nevertheless, Peter, generous and impulsive as ever, had, without thinking much of what was implied, early taken steps in the direction of a liberal attitude to pagans. It was perhaps his influence which led to the concordat under which Paul worked for some time with the concurrence of the "pillars" of the church at Jerusalem, and according to The Acts of the Apostles it was he who persuaded the Council of Jerusalem to sanction a liberal missionary policy in Syria and Cilicia. And, indeed, when Peter visited Paul and his friends at Antioch, he was quite carried away by the enthusiasm of the forward movement. The controversy had come to hinge upon the question of eating at table with converts from paganism who had not been adopted into the community with the recognized Jewish ceremonies, especially circumcision. Large questions do sometimes turn upon small points. This point, however, was not so small as it might seem. It is not a small thing today for an Indian Brahmin to break caste by eating with a pariah. Moreover, the Christian brotherhood had from the first made its life center about the common table. To refuse to

break bread with a fellow-Christian was to deny that he had any part in Christ, at whose table the brotherhood met. Peter, however, sat at table with these half-Greek Syrians in the friendliest way, and the difficulty seemed over.

Then came numbers of the extreme "right wing"—adherents of James, but no doubt "plus royalistes que le roi." Peter, frightened, drew back. Even Paul's old friend and leader, Barnabas, gave way. The dispute culminated in a regrettable public quarrel between Peter and Paul, the echoes of which, perhaps, were to be heard later even in the Pauline churches. Peace, however, seems to have been restored, as between the leaders. Peter probably took in the end the liberal view, and even James kept on friendly terms with Paul, and it was not by any ill-will of his, but quite the contrary, that his ill-calculated tactics ultimately contributed to Paul's arrest and imprisonment (Acts 21.20-30).

But the extreme conservatives pursued Paul everywhere with unabated zeal. They opened war by a powerful mission to Galatia, where they all but succeeded in winning to a Judaic Christianity the churches Paul had founded (Gal. 1.6-9; 3.1-5; 4.12-20; 5.1-12; 6.12-16). From that time he had to count "perils from false brethren" among the difficulties of his work (2 Cor. 11.26). During most of his life he was a nonconformist and a free lance, regarded with cool and rather suspicious tolerance by some of the most respected leaders of the Church, and with horror by the extreme right wing. We need not impugn their motives as Paul did in the heat of controversy. They were honest men and zealous servants of the gospel as they understood it. Paul made mistakes, and some bad ones, in the course of the struggle. But Paul was right and his opponents were wrong on the main issue.—C. Harold Dodd, in The Meaning of Paul for Today.

The Passing of Jewish Christianity. In the year 70 A.D. Jerusalem was taken by Titus, the temple burned, and the city, excepting a few towers and parts of the walls, razed to the ground. Some years before this, James, the Christian leader, had been put to death, on charges which are obscure to us, by the Sadducean authorities. Not long after that the usual conditions of turbulence in Palestine were greatly aggravated; Jerusalem soon became a horrible scene of bloody partisan strife and mob violence; and at last the Christians—how many in number we know not—withdrew from the Holy City, went across the Jordan, and took up their residence in the Gentile town of Pella. Without a center, without any important general organization, without any great leader, Jewish Christianity as a distinctive power in the Christian Church came to an end. There continued to be Christians in Palestine. Some of these, like Hegesippus in the second century, entered wholly into sympathy with general church thought. Others maintained their natural character and were more or less known to Christian writers as Nazarene or Ebionite Christians. Cut off from the main Church, and treated as heretics, they gradually disappear from view. It seems almost like irony when about 150 A.D., eighty years after the destruction of Jerusalem, Justin Martyr actually apologized for his own liberality in holding that some Christians who observed the institutions of Judaism can be saved. It marks the complete reduction of specific Jewish Christianity to the position of a half-tolerated sect.—James Hardy Ropes, in The Apostolic Age.

Later Controversies in the Christian Church. The whole history of the Church is a record of strife—and strife among brethren, rival factions, rival doctrines, rival systems of government. It is useless to recall the dead and buried controversies of the past centuries, but every student of Church History knows that not an item of the Creed was accepted by the Church without the fiercest quarrels and the keenest discussions—sometimes even to the drawing of the sword and the shedding of blood.

We have among ourselves evidences enough that violent strife and disputation can be caused by religion. Christian churches are divided on points of doctrine, and in the Church of England today, there are parties arrayed against each other about ritual, and even about the sacrament of the Lord's Supper itself, which is the one thing that ought to unite all Christians. Many of our churches were born in the throes of conflict and cradled in controversy. Men, following truth, constrained to speak truth, have had to live at variance with brethren whom they respected, but with whom they could not agree.

Lord Rosebery, in a very beautiful speech at Epsom, referred to a controversy in the English Church at the time about incense and lights in worship, and said: "Theological discussions are, for some reason unknown to the layman, conducted with more asperity than any other form of discussion. Why that should be so, why the gospel that came to preach peace and goodwill in this world should be so often the means of provoking the most violent disputations, is a problem I confess I am unable to solve."—Condensed from The Gift of Influence, by Hugh Black.

What Paul Would not Do Today. If Paul were living today, he never would attempt to force an Occidental Christianity upon the Orient. He would leave every nation free to develop a Christianity of its own type, as long as it was true to the fundamentals of the common faith. He knew that a world-wide Church could not be a Church of universal uniformity. It would represent unity-in-difference—unity in essentials with widest liberty in everything else.

We are just coming back in this country to the sanity and clarity of Paul's vision in these things. The Church is beginning to realize that the one Church of the Christ which is to conquer the world need not be one in creed or in customs so long as it is one in loyalty to the Lord. With Paul's universalistic outlook there is of necessity something of Paul's breadth of tolerance and universal charity.—J. D. Hayes, in Paul and his Epistles.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. The conflict between conservatism and liberalism. Is the conservative always right? Is the liberal always right? Can there be some mediation effected between the two opposing positions? Can both live in harmony in the same church?

2. Just how far are you accepting this principle of Christian liberty? Are you giving every man who accepts Christ as his Lord and Savior liberty to differ from you in creed and in religious forms? Or, what is often still more difficult, do you allow men to differ from you in social standing and habit, and still give them your sympathy and good will? Is the liberty you believe in for you, or for the other fellow, or for both?

FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

CHRISTIAN FREEDOM

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with the earlier verses of this fifteenth chapter of The Acts.

How a very Great Issue was Decided. Huxley says that the scientist should sit down before the fact like a little child; and this young Church seems to have done that. They let the fact speak for itself. The Gentiles were coming in: they were coming in without circumcision, yet they were bearing the hall-marks of grace. And if the Holy Spirit was not paying any attention to circumcision, who were they to compromise the movement and put obstructions in the way of these eager Gentiles?

The theory and argument [against the admission of Gentiles without their first accepting Judaism] were impressive; and I have no doubt that that stern old Tory, James, hardened a good deal as the advocates made their points. And then Peter took the floor and told over again the remarkable experience at Cæsarea, when Cornelius and his friends, hearing the call of the gospel, eagerly answered and obeyed it, for all the world like those violent men that Jesus had once spoken of who would take the Kingdom of Heaven by storm. And then Barnabas and Paul took up the story. They told of the great happenings at Antioch in Syria, and it was Paul, I suspect, who took them with him in thought to Antioch in Pisidia, and Iconium and Lystra and Derbe, and showed how God had opened a wide door to the Gentiles, and the Gentiles were sweeping in. That was the fact; and as it unfolded itself in all its implied promise and romance, I can see the light of battle kindling in the eyes of James as he sat in the president's chair; and grateful tears were pouring down the cheeks of the wise elders; even the conservative pleaders were subdued into astonished silence. Who indeed had ever heard the like?

The fact had done its work; the case was ended; there was no discussion, no vote; and James, his heart glowing and fire in his eyes, gave the unanimous judgment. We stand, he says virtually, for the Church of the open door—the

Church of God, who long ago foretold the coming in of the Gentiles. Let them all come! It was a very great issue that had been decided.—From a Sermon by Richard Roberts.

Paul's Way. Paul's beautiful yieldingness in every matter that touched his own opinions or his own practices, taken along with his iron will in what was not his own; these two things must be taken together to know Paul. Luther hits the whole matter here in a way that would have delighted Paul. "If two goats meet each other in a narrow path above a piece of water, what do they do?" asks Luther. "They cannot turn back, and they cannot pass each other; there is not an inch of spare room. If they were to butt at each other, both would fall into the water below and be drowned. What will they do, do you suppose? What would you do? Well, Nature has taught the one goat to lie down to let the other pass over it, and then they both get to the end of the way safe and sound." Now, Paul was always meeting goats on narrow ledges of rock with the sea below. And so are you, and so am I. Will you lie down and let me pass over your prostrate body, and then we shall both be saved?—Alexander Whyte, in The Apostle Paul.

Speaking the Truth in Love. These words of Paul in his letter to the Ephesians, "speaking the truth in love," were made the motto of his life by a great Scottish preacher, John Stuart Blackie. He used to write them in the Greek form on every envelope he addressed, and his friends said that they were the key-note of his character.

In one of his books Dr. Hugh Black thinks that the very sharpness of religious controversies has been due to the nearness and common standing of the parties. "The bitterest disputes in life occur among those who are nearest each other in spirit," he declares. "You do not quarrel with the man with whom you have little or no communication. It is not the man in the street who chafes your soul, and has power to ruffle your temper. It is the man of your own household with whom you have points of contact. You only make enemies among your friends. This is so in all domains of life as well as in religion. A quarrel between a Democrat and a Republican is never so acute as is the quarrel between two Democrats. Home quarrels of all kinds are according to the facts of human nature the bitterest of all; and the Church disputes are of the class of home quarrels.

"There are times when truths must be defended strenuously, unreservedly; times when neutrality is not wisdom but cowardice; times when the true word must be spoken though thrones shake; when falsehood must be unmasked, and attacked at any and every cost—except the cost of love.

"When the apostle adds 'in love' to his admonition to follow truth, he is not limiting the idea of truth-speaking; he is really extending it; he is defining what it means. It is here that all the mistakes of religious controversies are made. Men in the stress of the fight get so easily hard, and bitter, and revengeful and censorious, and even when they are right, the bloom departs from the truth. Truth-speaking is a manner as well as a matter."

Freedom to Worship God. Three hundred years ago James I was King of England. He claimed that he ruled "by divine right," that his word was law, and his people had no rights that he needed to respect unless he wished. Among his people were some who did not like all the forms and ceremonies of the Church of England, the Established Church, as it is called. King James would not allow them to form a separate church, where they could elect their own minister and manage their own affairs, and when they tried to do this some of them were put in prison. They escaped to Holland, where they could worship as they pleased. But they did not wish their children to become Dutch, and in 1620 these Pilgrims sailed in the Mayflower for America, and landed at Plymouth.

"They have left unstained what there they found—
Freedom to worship God."

Sentence Sermons.

Be calm in arguing; for fierceness makes
Error a fault, the truth discourtesy.—George Herbert.

"When one will not, two cannot, quarrel."

LESSON XIII—SEPTEMBER 27

REVIEW: THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY IN ASIA

GOLDEN TEXT: They rehearsed all things that God had done with them, and that he had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles. Acts 14.27

DEVOTIONAL READING Matthew 13.31-33

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

Recall the story to which these statements refer:

Let us so live that others may take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus.

We are in danger of obeying man rather than God, of thinking more about what others will say than about how God will judge.

"O little ship that rocked the wave
Bound for the Cyprian shore,
Rare hostage to the world you gave
In him whose life you bore."

When men refuse to retain God in their knowledge, they can hardly expect to be secure from the temptation to bow before creatures of like passions with themselves, whether they be cunning adventurers or heartless tyrants.—The Christian.

We are daily judging ourselves unworthy of divine grace in every act of refusal to accept and rely on it.—Lyman Abbott.

The world has often had its dreams of gods who had come down in the likeness of men, and even of a divine influence pervading all things; but no ethnic religion has told how men may come to God.—H. E. Fox.

"The talk of Lenine was overbearing and belligerent as he breathed out threatenings and slaughter on the road to Genoa."

St. Stephen did not get the bishop's pay for that long sermon of his to the Pharisees.—Ruskin.

All souls that struggle and aspire,
All hearts of prayer by thee are lit,
And dim or clear, thy tongues of fire
On dusky tribes and twilight countries sit.—Whittier.

"Japan has seen believers scatter abroad preaching the Word, and many with one accord giving heed to the things that were spoken."

"Hitherto Christianity had imagined that men could only approach it through the gate of the temple, but at Antioch it discovered that the gate of the temple was only one of a multitude of avenues."

I asked Benny in what part of the Scripture he had found an allusion to essays, and he at once explained that the man from Ethopia was 'settin' in his carriage readin' essays.' "—Annie Trumbull Slosson.

QUESTIONS UPON THE QUARTER'S LESSON

For Young People and Adults. 1. Who wrote The Acts? Why did he write it? 2. How many chapters of The Acts tell about the growth of the church under Peter's leadership? 3. What revolutionary idea came to Peter, and what was his reaction thereto? 4. Why did Paul's early training make him bigoted? What effect upon him must Stephen's martyrdom have made? 5. What is perhaps the most important single event in apostolic church history, and why? 6. What is conversion? Must children be converted to become members of the Kingdom? Must they have the same kind of religious experiences as adults? 7. Who discovered the greatness of Paul and saved him for

his mission, and what experiences did he afterwards have with Paul? 8. What was the first church to be interested in foreign missions, and what kind of men did she send forth? 9. What important question was settled at the Council in Jerusalem, and how? 10. What instances of persecution are recorded in these lessons, and how did they help to spread Christianity?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. Write the names of Paul's Epistles in the order in which they are given in the New Testament. 2. Who were the first foreign missionaries? 3. How did Peter learn that God made no distinction between Gentiles and Jews? 4. Who said, "Lay not this sin to their charge," and under what circumstances? 5. Locate the city near which Paul saw the vision which changed his life; the city in which Paul was imprisoned; the city in which he was stoned; the city in which he was worshiped. 6. What is a martyr? Who was the first Christian martyr? 7. Who started out with Paul on his first missionary journey? Who went all the way with him? 8. What did Paul tell the Galatians about sowing and reaping? 9. Who asked, "Who art thou, Lord?" Why did he ask it? What is the rest of the story? 10. Where were Gentiles first received in large numbers into the Christian church? 11. Where were the followers of Christ first called Christians? 12. For what is Antioch of Syria remembered in the history of The Acts?

WRITTEN WORK

For Young People and Adults.

1. Pilate's account to the Sanhedrin of the excitement aroused by Peter's preaching at Pentecost.
2. A letter to the Jerusalem Christian Advocate informing its readers about the new departure in the Church at Antioch.
3. An editorial in the Antioch Journal of Syria expressing regret at the departure of Paul and Barnabas.
4. An interview with the Priest of Jupiter at Lystra concerning Paul and Barnabas.
5. A letter to the Congregationalist of Antioch in Syria explaining the difference of opinion that arose between two missionaries and its results.

For Intermediates and Seniors.

1. The Generosity of the Early Christians.
2. Peter's Experience at Joppa.
3. An Appreciation of Barnabas.
4. Experience at Lystra.

QUESTIONS TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

For Young People and Adults. 1. In what way did the decision of the Council at Jerusalem prepare the way for Paul's mission to Europe? 2. At what chapter and verse does the writer of The Acts begin to use the pronoun "we," and what is its significance? 3. Where did Judson want to go as a missionary, how was he hindered, and what field did he find? 4. How was Livingstone hindered and led in his work? 5. What did Lincoln say about his belief in Divine direction? 6. How did Paul recognize the man in his vision as from Macedonia? 7. What is the significance of God's evident intent to move to the west with the gospel? 8. Why did Paul go directly to Philippi to begin his work?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. What disagreement did Paul and Barnabas have at Antioch, and what was the result? (Acts 15.36-41.) 2. Whom did Paul choose to accompany him on his second missionary journey? (Acts 16.1-3.) 3. Whose presence is indicated by the pronoun "we" in verse 10? 4. What is the meaning of "assayed," verse 7? 5. What was Paul's question when on the way to Damascus he recognized Jesus as his Lord? 6. Describe the course which Paul followed in going from Antioch in Syria to Philippi. 7. What famous battle took place near the city of Philippi? 8. Who were the first converts to Christ in Europe?

Salonika, Ancient Thessalonica

FOURTH QUARTER

STUDIES IN THE ACTS, THE EPISTLES, AND THE REVELATION

(Second Half of a Six Months' Course)

LESSON I—OCTOBER 4

THE MACEDONIAN CALL

GOLDEN TEXT: Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations. Matthew 28.19

LESSON Acts 15.36 to 16.15; Romans 15.18-21

DEVOTIONAL READING Hebrews 11.8-10

ACTS 16.6 And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; 7 and when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not; 8 and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. 10 And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel unto them.

11 Setting sail therefore from Troas, we made a straight course to Samothrace, and the day following to Neapolis; 12 and from thence to Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a "Roman" colony: and we were in this city tarrying certain days. 13 And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down, and spake unto the women that were come together. 14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul. 15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide "there." And she constrained us.

ROMANS 15.18 For I will not dare to speak of any things save those which Christ wrought through me, for the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deed, 19 in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Holy Spirit; so that from Jerusalem, and round about even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ; 20 yea, making it my aim so to preach the gospel, not where Christ was "already" named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation; 21 but, as it is written,

They shall see, to whom no tidings of him came,
And they who have not heard shall understand.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Two Great Workers Separate, Acts 15.36-41. "Come and let us go back to visit the brothers in every town where we have proclaimed the word

of the Lord. Let us see how they are doing" (Moffatt's Version), said Paul to Barnabas, who had spent some time in Antioch of Syria after the return from the Council in Jerusalem. Barnabas was ready for another missionary tour, but he wished to try Mark again, while Paul would not take a man with them who had deserted them in Pamphylia on their first tour. Unable to agree, the two apostles separated—Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed for Cyprus, and here we part with that great-hearted missionary, for there is no further record of his work. Paul chose Silas as his companion and they went by land through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches on the way.

"The separation of Paul and Barnabas was highly conducive to the progress of the gospel. Each could now work with greater freedom. Barnabas would be delivered from a position in which he might from the increasing importance of Paul feel his own influence was diminishing; and Paul would feel more thoroughly independent. Besides, instead of one mission, now there were two; Barnabas and Mark laboring in one quarter, and Paul and Silas in another; and thus double work would be performed" (Gloag).

II. Timothy Chosen as a Companion, Acts 16.1-5. Paul and Silas visited Derbe and Lystra, and in the latter city Paul chose Timothy, a young man of good reputation, to accompany them on their journey. As they traveled from town to town they delivered to the churches the resolutions passed at the Council in Jerusalem. Everywhere the churches were strengthened in the faith (i.e., faith in Christ, as over against the idea of the works of the law) and increased in numbers.

III. Frustrated Purposes, Acts 16.6-8. It was Paul's intention to go directly west into the province of Asia, but he was "forbidden of the Holy Spirit" and he turned northward and went through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, until they were over against the province of Mysia.

"I am confident that when the Almighty wants me to do, or not to do, a particular thing, he finds a way of letting me know it" (Lincoln).

From Mysia they made an attempt to enter the province of Bithynia, but here again they were hindered; "the spirit of Jesus suffered them not." Accordingly, they passed by (i.e., passed through) Mysia until they came to Troas on the Hellespont, the chief port of the province of Mysia.

"Paul did not say, 'I will wait till I feel a call.' He pressed ahead until he was obstructed. There is a deal too much lethargic waiting for Divine Guidance, when what God is wanting is to see some sign of life and movement to guide. You can steer a moving, but not a motionless ship. Doubtless a man may hustle about so, in his own fussy plans, as to be in no fit condition to hear Divine counsel or to seek it" (Robert E. Speer).

IV. The Call to Europe, 16.9, 10. Up to the time of Paul's vision at Troas, the Holy Spirit had exerted his influence by hindering, restraining. Then at Troas a challenge was set before Paul, he was called to make a new advance; in a vision at night there was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia and help us. Professor Ramsay thinks that the man of Macedonia, because of the turn of phrase, was in the semblance of a certain definite individual, and he suggests that it was Luke who brought to Paul's attention the opportunity in Macedonia. Luke was a Greek, possibly from Macedonia. Other scholars disagree with Ramsay, because of the way in which Luke immediately associates himself with the call to evangelize the Macedonians, "concluding that God had called us." All the providence which had conspired to bring Paul to Troas would tend to make the challenge of this vision more irresistible.

"Would you venture to say that it was all just imagination; that, of course, there was no man, no voice? Don't you see that there was something more real than a human shape, speaking human words to the sleeping apostle, that there was that mighty power which has been called 'the urge of God' acting upon a soul ready to obey the Divine behest to the uttermost? The form in which that message clothed itself mattered very little;

to Paul it was visible, tangible reality, and straightway he made it so. Because he was an idealist, a dreamer, a visionary, he achieved a life-work which has changed the entire course of history, and left its mark upon the world to this day" (J. Warschauer).

And when he had seen the vision, straightway "we" sought to go forth into Macedonia, writes Luke. The plural "we" from this time appears in the narrative. This seems to indicate that Luke joined Paul's party here, and that from now on the Book of Acts is the record of an eye-witness. Luke was a physician, and it has been suggested that Paul's health was the first cause of Luke's journey with Paul. Yet we see that Luke evidently shared in Paul's enthusiasm for the new work to which they were being called.

Try to imagine the shift in history, if the Spirit of Jesus had suffered Paul to go to the East, instead of leading him down to Troas, a port opposite Europe. What would have been the situation today, if the gospel had gone to the East instead of to the West?

V. The Beginning of the Evangelization of Europe, Acts 16.11-15. God gave Paul a vision of the Macedonians' need, but he did not miraculously transport him to that field of labor. He must needs seek out a ship, find out its day of sailing, bargain the passage price with the captain, and carry his luggage aboard.

The response of Paul was prompt and effective. Within a short time the apostle with his three comrades had started on their adventurous journey across the Hellespont. Some one has said that prudence is the masterstroke of the devil. At any rate, the Church has often been retarded and defeated because the counsels of men who had no vision and who were superlatively endowed with caution have prevailed (J. A. Hutton).

Some one points out that Luke seems to like the sea and generally records the incidents from harbor to harbor. It was in a straight course from Troas to Samothrace and, on the day following, to Neapolis. From Neapolis the company went, probably on foot, some ten miles to Philippi in Macedonia. This city was the first of the district, a Roman colony. It was a strategic point at which to begin the evangelization of Europe, for it was a cosmopolitan meeting place of the East and the West.

"To me this is only an instance of how God always works, even in his biggest things. We used to think we only glorified God by seeing him in specially abrupt acts of creation, dazzling miracles that broke into the natural order like a flash of lightning: whereas we see now that the one way to glorify God is to see him in the quiet, natural order itself,—in the years of slow, steady growth. His work is done in silent and unobtrusive ways, even as the grass grows, the stars swing in their silent orbits, and his spiritual harvest comes by the work of one little seed there and one little seed here. A man lands on Neapolis, goes thence to Philippi—could anything be more natural or orderly? And yet that is how God chose to convert Europe, and that is how you and I alone can convert the world. Let us scatter the seed here and there; let us land our lonely adventures at this post and that: God sends the harvest, God sends the dawn" (James Black).

Paul and his company were in Philippi "certain days," during which he may have worked at his trade as tent-maker to recoup his finances, which were depleted by the cost of the trip from Troas. Philippi being chiefly a military town and not a mercantile center, the Jews there were not numerous and there was no synagogue. Paul's opportunity to preach appeared on the Sabbath Day when he learned that a company of women met to pray by the river side. The women were, in all likelihood, Greeks who had become Jewish proselytes and met regularly by the river for convenience in their ceremonial washings. Paul did not hesitate to begin his great venture of faith in Europe with women who came together to pray. Their number was so small that he did not preach a sermon, but simply sat down and talked with them. Some one has called it "gossiping the gospel."

Dr. Charles E. Jefferson writes: "Paul loved to talk about his religion. His religious experience was to him the most precious and thrilling part of his life, and he took delight in narrating it to as many as were willing to listen. That amazing experience was behind all he thought and wrote and did."

When we read the Epistle to the Philippians and sense the spiritual power and the rich quality of life in that wonderful church at Philippi to which Paul wrote from his prison in Rome, it is not easy to picture its beginning in this little company of women meeting by the river bank as Paul sits and talks over in familiar intimacy the story of the gospel. Yet this small seed produced a rich harvest. "A certain woman" of the group, a seller of purple, a native of Thyatira, in Lydia (whence comes her name), a district given over to the making of dye stuff and especially purple dye, heard Paul and believed and was baptized, she and her household with her. "Such wholesale conversions (see also the case of the jailer) strike us as artificial: but we must remember the solidarity of feeling in the ancient family and the example of an earnest mistress would greatly sway her domestics, some of whom, at least, were no doubt among the women of verse thirteen" (Bartlett).

VI. Paul's Aim in his Work, Romans 15.18-21. From the moment when Ananias informed Paul that Christ counted him a chosen instrument to bear his name before the Gentiles, up until the hour when Paul addressed his letter to the Romans, he had visioned with increasing clearness that his task was "to make the Gentiles obedient to Christ." Christ had worked through him, he writes, through his words and deeds, through the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Holy Spirit. From Jerusalem and round about even unto Illyricum, on the west of Macedonia, he has, he proudly declares, "fully preached the gospel of Christ." This was Paul's glorying, that he had met to its fullest extent the duty of his calling as the apostle to the Gentiles. He could point to his task and call it done, as far as time and circumstances had permitted.

His special aim had been not to build upon another's foundation, but to preach Christ where he had not been named. In the words of Isaiah,

> They shall see, to whom no tidings of him came,
> And they who have not heard shall understand.

"Paul was going from the religious enlightenment of the East—I am choosing my words—into the spiritual paganism and dullness of the West. How would he fare among those white Western pagans? I shall be content to confine myself to only one thing which gave him confidence and hope—one thing, that is, apart from his overwhelming belief that God would see him through. That one thing is this, that he had a reasoned belief that the message of our Lord Jesus was the one and only message for all men, no matter who or what they were" (James Black).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Philippi, the first of the district, Acts 16.12. There was great rivalry among cities for that title. Professor Ramsay declared that "Amphipolis was ranked first by general consent and Philippi first by its own consent." He finds that every city which could pretend to the first place in respect of any qualification whatsoever called itself "first" and aroused the jealousy of other cities that counted themselves equally prominent—a state of affairs not lacking in modern countries!

By a riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, verse 13. When there was no synagogue the Jews generally preferred to say their prayers by the water-side, whether of sea or river, for this afforded opportunity for their ablutions; compare 21.5 and Ezra 8.15-21. Josephus quotes a decree of Halicarnassus allowing the Jews to make their prayers on the seashore according to the custom of their fathers; and two hundred years after Christ Tertullian still mentions "oratione litorales" (prayers on the shore) as a characteristic of the Jews.—R. B. Rackham.

Come into my house and abide there, Acts 16.15. Lydia is remembered not

only for the readiness in which she accepted Christ, but for her generous hospitality to Paul and his company. Hospitality is a virtue of the East. "Every stranger is an invited guest," "The guest, while in the house, is its lord" are common proverbs of the East.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Perhaps a whole year has elapsed since the Council at Jerusalem, and two years since Paul returned to his headquarters in the Church at Antioch of Syria from his first missionary journey.

With our lesson today we begin the study of his second great missionary journey. "This journey, begun on an impulse and then taking a course other than that which was originally planned, became of vital importance not only to the new church, but to Europeans and Americans today," writes Professor William Lyon Phelps. "Paul was led for the first time to visit Europe and to establish the gospel in the cultivated circles of the western world. In addition to this salient fact, he met on this expedition first Timothy and then Luke, both of whom, and especially the latter, were to be of immense assistance in the propagation of the Christian religion. It is difficult therefore to overestimate the importance of what is called Paul's second missionary journey."

It is eight years after his conversion before Paul goes on his first missionary journey, and fourteen before the plans of his life's work as Apostle to the Gentiles really become plain to him in the vision of the Macedonian. We are surprised. We had thought that once the will was surrendered there would be no doubt. We did not expect to find, as the great apostle found, that we should encounter objections and controversies, that some Peter would have to be withstood to the face, that some Barnabas would have to be left, that important people would have to be consulted to see if what we supposed to be the divine will were right. Yes, the giving up the will does not mean that it is a perfect instrument because it is surrendered. It has to be shaped and pointed, to be made strong and steady.—G. H. S. Walpole, in Life's Chances.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

From Antioch in Syria to Tarsus in Cilicia, over the Taurus Mountains to Derbe and on to Lystra and Iconium, Paul went, and in all this he was covering familiar ground.

Asia was the Roman province along the Ægean Sea; it included the three districts of Mysia on the north, Lydia in the center, and Caria on the south. When Paul reached Asia and felt forbidden to preach in that province, he wished to go northward into Bithynia, the Roman province along the southern shore of the Black Sea. Then his plans were again changed, and he crossed Mysia to Troas on the Ægean.

Philippi, to which Paul hastened, lay on the great marble-paved Egnatian Road which united Italy across Greece with Asia. It was founded by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, whence its name. In Julius Cæsar, Shakespeare has immortalized the Plains of Philippi, where ninety years before Paul's time (48 B.C.) Brutus and Cassius fought with Octavius and Mark Antony for the liberty of the world and were defeated. Here the Roman Empire had its rise with Augustus Cæsar (Octavius) as its first Emperor. In honor of the victory the city of Philippi was made a Roman colony with the full title of Colonia Augusta Julia Philippensi. A colony was really a bit of Rome on foreign soil; its people had all the privileges of Roman citizenship.

Only a few Turkish huts and the ruins of two gateways supposed to date from the time of the Emperor Claudius mark the site of the Philippi that Paul knew.

Thyatira, the city whence Lydia came, was in the province of Asia, half-way between the Hermus and Caicus rivers. It seems to have had more trade-guilds than any other city of Asia; wool-workers, linen-workers, leather-workers, dyers, tanners, etc.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Try to forget the familiarity of this and succeeding lessons and see the momentousness of the facts behind the words.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

WHAT TOOK PAUL TO EUROPE?

Beginning the Lesson. Paul having established as a principle the universality of the gospel and the freedom which is in Christ, the door of Gentile Europe is to be flung open and Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles will be guided to enter it. With "his Hebrew soul, his Greek mind and his Roman will," Paul is divinely equipped for the work of carrying the gospel into the pagan world and starting it on its way down through the centuries.

In all his guidance of Paul during his second missionary journey, the Holy Spirit intimated by obstacles, pressed by circumstances, induced by opportunities, lured by challenges. In what words are the obstacles and circumstances told? In what the opportunity and challenge?

What Took Paul to Europe? The plans of Paul and his party came straight against obstacles which they could not possibly surmount. It is characteristic of their quality that instead of being disheartened and downcast they immediately interpreted these obstructions as evidence that God had other plans than those which had been in their minds. There is an enormous amount of nervous waste which is entirely avoided if we can take this attitude when the way is definitely and finally closed before us. God can speak in obstacles as well as in open doors. The work of the kingdom has been definitely retarded by those who would do one thing or nothing at all. They have beaten their strength against walls which were meant to direct them to seek some other way.

If Paul could not do one thing he could dream about another. If he could not go into the Province of Asia he could open his imagination to the haunting sense of Macedonia. Instead of indulging in bitter thoughts because one way was closed, he began at once to think about another. And soon the very hours of sleep were glowing with a sense of the call of Macedonia. God can do tremendous things with men who have sufficient elasticity to be able to change their plans.—Lynn Harold Hough.

What if Paul Had Reasoned as Men Reason Today? He was just a middle-class worker, a tentmaker by profession. His outward appearance was most noticeably common; his clothes certainly would be coarse and rough; and, to crown all, he was a Jew, an Oriental, despised by these lordly, cultured Greeks, among whom he was now adventuring,—despised as a "barbarian," to use their own phrase.

It is indeed true that, from the intellectual and spiritual points of view, he was among the earth's elect, but outwardly he was as insignificant as any man might well be. In his writings he is led to apologize for his personal appearance, for his weakness of body, some mysterious ailment that he possessed, or rather that possessed him, and for his halting gift of speech; and you may be sure that when a man like this apologizes for himself he at least believes that he has something to apologize for.

And yet, from the angle of history and of modern progress and thought, that insignificant landing of Paul and Luke was the turning-point in European civilization. Our modern Western world is largely what that man and the message he carried have made it. As he went from thence to Philippi, he brought a new power, he brought a dynamic, he brought an inspiration to this Western world of ours which is still its glory and the one thing that keeps it safe. For he brought God, in the person of Jesus Christ.

I want you to think of what he brought, of the new civilization, the new views of man and God and duty, the law, the truth, the doctrine of human aspiration and happiness which Paul's message meant. Who can reckon what Jesus has meant for the Western world?—though we often think we could get on without him. But just take away what Jesus has given, and what have you left? What has it meant to the Anglo-Saxon race, for our liberty and our freedom, and grace and mercy and gentleness, for every noble institution of light and truth, for every good reform and every battle for right, for the gladness and the cleanness of daily living, for home and love and women and little children, for the power of deathless ideals and vicarious suffering.

Now, if Paul had argued, as I am tired of hearing people in Edinburgh

argue, he would have said this: The creed of the East can never be the creed of the West. They are different races. These white races, enslaved in their vile heathenism, can never understand or accept the high, pure, compelling creed of the Christ I preach. "East is East and West is West, and never the twain will meet." He might have repeated that hoary old lie, and stayed in Troas, if he argued as people argue now. But Paul believed in the unity of the human race, its common nature, its common sin and common need and common pathos. If this Oriental preacher had argued as men now argue, you and I would have been left in the blight of our Druidical paganism.—Condensed from a Sermon, by James Black.

God's Plan. God's plan was first to evangelize the white Gentile world; to save our Teutonic forefathers as the most strategic thing to be done; to move toward the coming Anglo-Saxon civilization, and so get his hands on the mightiest national life of the world; to gather resources in the quality of men and the abundance of material means for this world-enterprise.

The stream that set Anglo-Saxonward that day has held its course for two thousand years, sometimes against impediments and obstructions reared by men who cared not which way God was going; and sometimes its course might have been swifter and its benefits to the world greater had those who did care known the meaning of the hour and gotten things out of the way. Surely, this fact which has so vitally affected the whole history of Christianity and the world is worthy of more thought than it has received.—G. F. Love.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. God's providences.

2. What are the implications of this event for Christians of America? Is Dr. Henry van Dyke right in saying that the real question is not so much whether the non-Christians will be saved if we do not carry the gospel to them, as it is whether we shall be saved if we do not?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What bearing would the intense Roman pride and loyalty of the people of Philippi have upon their way of treating Paul and Silas? 2. Had you been in Paul's place would you have found it hard to reconcile the promise of the vision at Troas inviting you to come over and help, with the antagonism at Philippi? 3. Of what other accusation does that of the slave owners remind you, and why? 4. "It hurts business": what does this claim often mean today? 5. What famous Roman committed suicide at Philippi? 6. Why did Paul insist upon being honorably dismissed?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HOW CHRISTIANITY CAME TO EUROPE

Beginning the Lesson. "The Holy Spirit guides, many times through circumstances over which the boy or girl has no control, which sometimes seem for the moment, disappointing. If, however, each one tries honestly to find out what God wishes him or her to do and goes forward acting according to conscience and using prayer, God will make the way prosperous. Compare the case of David Livingstone. He was terribly disappointed that he could not go to China as a missionary and he did not wish to go to Africa at all, but it was to this latter work that he was guided, and it was that which made his name famous."

It was in this way that the call to Europe came to Paul. How did he try to go first in one direction and then in another? How does Luke say he was kept from carrying out his plans? How do you think the Holy Spirit hindered him?

At last Paul came to Troas, and what happened there? The way over into Europe then became plain and easy. In what sort of ship did he set sail?

Paul's Ship. Strange as it may seem to us at the present day who are used to rapid changes in methods of travel, and who think nothing of throwing away a half-used automobile because a newer and better one has been manufactured, there was very little advance in ship-building from some time before the period of The Acts until the sixteenth century of our own era. Ships were from one hundred to two hundred feet in length, with a beam, or width, of about one quarter of the length. The hull was rather blunt at bow and stern and the

deck was built up high and overhanging at each end. There were two or sometimes three square sails, and in Paul's time these were made of flax or hides. These merchant ships were altogether different from the warships which were propelled by oars, as you may see in the pictures of Ben Hur. —Cornelius S. Abbott.

Paul's Response to the Cry of Need. To illustrate how Paul was always ready to respond to the cry of need, Dr. J. H. Jowett one time recalled his boyhood days in Halifax, England, where he lived in a house which commanded a good view of the town. In those days the news of an outbreak of fire was communicated to the firemen by the ringing of the Town Hall bell, and he observed that it took the firemen who lived in his district ten minutes to reach the Town Hall before they could know where the fire was raging. In the old days the cry of need had to awake the firemen; but today the firemen are already awake and not only awake, but ready—indeed, compared with the olden times he is half-way to the fire before it breaks out.

Following Paul's Method among the Cameroun Tribes of Africa. When Paul reached Philippi he sat down that first Sabbath day and spoke to the women that were come together. Jean K. Mackenzie tells us how the message came to the African village at Abiete:

Thirty years ago one weary white man, one lantern, one book of the word of God in the village of Abiete for one night—and this was the beginning of the Presbyterian Mission in the forests of the Cameroun.

The contagion of this good news, and the news of the great visit of Jesus have never ceased to spread among the Cameroun tribes. The way of its spreading has been primarily in the manner of Dr. Good's first journey, a man of God sitting down in a village with a book of the Word of God; a schoolboy of the tribe on a vacation sitting down in his father's palaver house, telling his father's friends about the things of God—reading from a letter of God to the children of men. A little girl, daughter of a Christian mother, sold into a slavery of marriage—telling her husband's many wives about the Things of God. A wandering minstrel of the love of God calling a group of carriers together of an evening—telling them, by the light of camp fires, that they are the children of God. A woman walking three days on a forest trail to inquire at the mission clearing about one of the commandments, and returning to her village with "Three Words of the Word of God." A chief of great dignity and reputation learning his letters of a younger brother that he might himself read the Word of God. Bekalli Mendom starting out at the beginning of his great Christion career to visit strange villages, telling the Word of God, cutting a nick in the handle of his tooth brush—a twig with a frayed end—for every one who heard gladly, and coming home from his journey with a tally of more than two hundred nicks. These were small seeds, cast from the hand of the sower in the spring of God's year in the forest, and behold the harvest.

This is the nature of the harvest grown in these thirty-three years: nearly eight hundred outposts of the mission, and a corps of twelve hundred native workers—evangelists and teachers. Thirty-one thousand pupils in the schools; eight hospitals; a leper colony; a great industrial school with every department manned by Christian teachers, sons of the Bulu, and a pay roll of over a thousand workmen, and a printing press that publishes over a million pages a year in the Bulu tongue. There is Sunday-school attendance of over a hundred thousand people; a church membership of over thirty thousand; and under Albert Good, son of the white man with the lantern in the village of Abiete, a theological class of one hundred.

Sentence Sermons. "No one else can do the job marked for you."

Boys and girls must keep their ears open and their hearts open to hear what God has to say to them, to see what he has done for them, and to find out where they can lend a hand.—Edward Everett Hale.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What happened at Philippi which led to the arrest of Paul and Silas? 2. What were the stocks, and what was the effect of having one's feet fastened in them? 3. Why could Paul and Silas sing hynms? 4. When Peter escaped from prison, what was done to the prison guards, which explains the jailor's fear?

LESSON II—OCTOBER 11

PAUL IN PHILIPPI

GOLDEN TEXT: Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice. Philippians 4.4

LESSON Acts 16.16-40; Philippians 4.4-9

DEVOTIONAL READING Romans 8.35-39

ACTS 16.22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent their garments off them, and commanded to beat them with rods. 23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: 24 who, having received such a charge, cast them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. 25 But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God, and the prisoners were listening to them; 26 and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison-house were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened; and every one's bands were loosed. 27 And the jailor, being roused out of sleep and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. 29 And he called for lights and sprang in, and, trembling for fear, fell down before Paul and Silas, 30 and brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house. 32 And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, immediately. 34 And he brought them up into his house, and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God.

PHILIPPIANS 4.4 Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice. 5 Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. 6 In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Fortune-telling Maid of Philippi, Acts 16.16-18. Our text (the entire text) immediately follows that of last week. As we saw then, Paul at Philippi was face to face with heathenism that knew nothing of Judaism, and at first he found only a small group of women prepared by Jewish teaching to whom he gave his gospel. He must have remained for some time in the city, for he organized a church which, though probably not large at the time of his departure, became a flourishing institution, as we know from the letter he wrote to it. The only event between the conversion of Lydia and Paul's departure to Thessalonica which Luke records in The Acts is the story which we study today.

There was a maid at Philippi who had a spirit of divination, or a Python, as is the marginal reading,—so termed from the tradition that the python delivered oracles at Delphi. The great dragon at Delphi slain by Apollo was called a python, and according to Plutarch that was the name also given at this time to a ventriloquist. Some mental condition existed whereby this maid "exercised a certain heightened perception which was used to foretell the future." The people of Philippi regarded her as inspired. She greatly disturbed Paul by following him and Silas and crying, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim unto you the way of salvation," for her reiterated chant drew a crowd of curiosity seekers. Professor Ramsay thinks that the girl's mind had become distorted and diseased by her belief in her supernatural possession, but was all the more acute in certain perceptions and intuitions, and that she had become alive to the moral influence which the intense faith of the strangers gave them. At length Paul turned to her, and in the name of Jesus Christ bade the spirit leave her. In some very real way she had a mental condition from which she was immediately released by Paul's command. Nothing further is told about her. One commentator

whose sympathy she has aroused expresses his belief that she would partake of the generous help of Lydia and the other Christian women at Philippi.

II. Vested Interests Disturbed, Acts 16.19-23. The slave-girl had lost faith in her own powers and the people no longer believed in her. She could tell no more fortunes, and was no longer profitable to her masters. Paul and Silas were to blame. Greatly angered, her owners turned upon the two men, raised a hue and cry, and dragged them into the market-place before the magistrates. Every Roman colony had two different magistrates, or prætors, as they were called. The market-place was the public square where business was conducted and justice—or injustice—was administered.

> "The owners of the slave girl did not give a moment's thought to the fact that she was saved to a normal life. They only thought of the fact that while they could capitalize her insanity, her sanity had no commercial value at all. Any nation which has a brilliant and far-reaching commercial development is sure to meet the temptation to which the keepers of this slave girl surrendered. Men who are constantly thinking of the success of a great business are tempted to think more of its success than of the means by which it is obtained. They are tempted to think more of economic values than of human values. They are tempted to think more of financial return than of moral responsibilities" (Lynn H. Hough).

Just as the Sanhedrin could not give the real, personal reason for demanding the death of Christ, and put forth a trumped-up political charge, so these slave owners could not demand the punishment of Paul and Silas on the charge of causing them to lose their gains, which were illegal, and therefore they assumed a very patriotic air and made their high-sounding charge. By appeal to prejudice, "those men, being Jews," by turning the charge from a mere private matter to a civic problem, "do exceedingly trouble our city," by the misrepresentation of Paul's teaching, "set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to receive or to observe," and by the sly, insinuating appeal to national pride, "for us, being Romans," the owners of the maid stampeded the magistrates.

Like many office holders, the magistrates would zealously demonstrate their loyalty to their government, and terrified by the tumult and clamor of the people, they allowed themselves to be rushed into a hasty and unfair treatment of Paul and Silas; for without examining into the case, they ordered the garments of the accused men torn off from them and the men beaten with rods. When men were to be scourged, their clothes were stripped off with the harshest violence. After receiving many stripes, Paul and Silas were then thrown into prison by order of the magistrates. This was one of the times to which Paul refers in 2 Cor. 11.25 where he says, "Thrice was I beaten with rods." The rods were carried by the lictors who always accompanied the magistrates. They were usually of birch, and were bound together into a round bundle with an ax in the middle, its blade projecting beyond them.

The blows fell on the bare backs and after that the bleeding victims were handed over to a jailor. In other places—Jerusalem, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutors were either the Jews or the multitude instigated by the Jews. This is the first mention of persecution by Roman authorities. "It is the prelude to those frequent persecutions to which during the first three centuries the Roman government subjected the Christians."

III. Chains and Chants, Acts 16.24, 25. The jailor to whom Paul and Silas were entrusted, put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. His zeal is not an expression of ill will, but rather of his devotion to duty, his faithfulness to his trust, and his honesty of administration.

The stocks consisted of two heavy beams, one upon the other. The upper beam was lifted and after the prisoner's ankles were put across two depressions in the lower beam, it was let down and fastened. It was then impossible for the prisoner to draw his feet through and escape.

Throbbing, bleeding backs and the discomfort of the stocks rendered sleep impossible that night. "No ill treatment could, however, destroy that secret source of joy and peace which Paul possessed. 'I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake' is his own triumphant expression when looking back, a few years later, over the

way by which the Lord had led him" (G. T. Stokes). At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns and the prisoners were listening to them: the Greek verb suggests attentive, interested hearing. Recall how Jesus joined in the singing of a hymn on that night of all nights in which he was betrayed and condemned.

> "Where now are the joyous Christians, the midnight singing Christians?" questioned Dr. Parks. We are not beaten and imprisoned for our faith, but do we meet with song even the unusual or the uncomfortable? As Spurgeon says, trials teach us what we are; they dig up the soil and let us see what we are made of.

IV. The Strange Release, Acts 16.25, 26. Paul and Silas probably sang the Psalms, and Dr. F. B. Meyer suggests it may have been Psalm 107.10-16 they were singing as the earthquake shock "burst the gates of brass and smote asunder the bars of iron." The foundations of the jail shook, releasing the bars and bolts of the doors so that they swung open and loosening the bands by which the prisoners were chained. We must not have in mind a prison like those in our land. "Any one who has seen a Turkish prison will not wonder that the doors were thrown open; each door was closed merely by a bar, and the earthquake, as it passed along the ground, forced the doorposts apart so that the bar slipped from its hold and the door swung open. An earthquake, when it spares its full terrors, sometimes behaves like a playful, good-natured sprite." All prisoners might have made their escape, but they must have been panic-stricken and, possibly awed by the feeling that God had heard the prayers of the men in that inner prison, they made no attempt to leave.

V. The Conversion of the Jailor, Acts 16.27-34. The jailor, awakened by the shock, saw the prison doors open and supposed the prisoners had escaped. True Roman that he was, he at once drew his sword and would have killed himself had not Paul prevented him. He knew that he would be held responsible for the escape of the prisoners and punished with death. Rather than face the dishonor of such a fate, many a Roman officer took his own life.

Seeing the jailor's intent, Paul hastily cried out in a loud voice, "Do thyself no harm; for we are all here." The jailor called for lights and sprang in and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas, for he connected this unusual happening in some way with these prisoners. "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" he cried, as he brought Paul and Silas out of the prison. "The earthquake seemed to him the expression of some deity's wrath and he desired to know what he must do to be saved from this wrath."

"Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house," they answered and immediately "spake the word of the Lord unto him," no doubt explaining who and what is meant by believing on Christ. And the jailor believed.

> "Danger and surprise discover the depths of a man's soul. A man of this elemental type, in such an experience, comes simply to God, if he comes at all. There were soldiers in the Great War who awakened to God and welcomed God's mercy in just this fashion. It is not the only way into the great experience, but it is one way" (R. C. Gillie).

The jailor washed the stripes which Paul and Silas had received, cleansing them from blood at the prison reservoir, and afterwards the missionaries baptized him and his household. And the jailor set meat before the missionaries, and they may then have told him of him who is the Bread of Life.

And with the breaking of the new day, new light and joy and peace came to the jailor's heart and home. Believing in God, he rejoiced greatly.

VI. Paul Stands upon his Rights, Acts 16.35-40. The magistrates, as the jailor had done, connected the earthquake with Paul and Silas, and they sent word to the jailor to release them. "Let them come themselves and bring us out!" exclaimed Paul indignantly, when informed of their order. He and Silas had been publicly beaten; they would not be privately released. They had been punished uncondemned; they would not be sent away unacquitted. Moreover, they were Roman citizens, and it was a crime to scourge

them. When Paul's words were reported to the magistrates they trembled for their own safety, and hastened to come humbly and beseech Paul and Silas to leave the city. Paul and Silas then left the prison acquitted.

It is not likely that Paul demanded his rights that day just to vindicate himself, to salve his self-esteem. He must have thought it wise to safeguard his Roman citizenship. He was to work in the Roman world where his citizenship would prove of value to him, and if he permitted despite to be done it here, it might be that it would avail him little later on. Then, too, his standing up for his rights and being vindicated in so public a manner would cause his disciples to be held in greater esteem.

After his release from prison Paul went to Lydia's home. He spent some time in discussing the work with the brethren, laying plans and strengthening them with the comfort of the gospel. The church was fully organized with bishops and deacons, Phil. 1.1. It is fair to say that "the apostles left Philippi with the seal of success plainly placed on the entrance of the gospel into Europe."

VII. The Christian Should be Joyous, Philippians 4.4-7. Paul was worn and in prison in Rome when he wrote his letter to the Philippians. It is one of the group of four "prison letters," the others being Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon, and was written between 61 and 63 A.D., or, as other scholars think, as early as 57 to 59 A.D. Unlike most of his letters, it contains no reproof and little warning, and abounds in expressions of affection which show how dear to his heart the people of this church had become and how fruitful his ministry among them had been. It is a short letter, but some twenty words are of joy, peace, content, thanksgiving, rejoicing.

"Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I will say, Rejoice," Paul writes. The dominant note in Paul's Christian litany has been joy in the Lord. The Philippians had seen this joy manifest its power in the event we have just studied.

"Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand."

True joy in the Lord affects our thinking about things and our attitudes toward people. When we learn to rejoice in all manner of adversity, when we grow forbearing toward all men, moderation, mildness and serenity appear. Self-assertion, rivalry, intolerance, impatience and opinionatedness, trying opposition and even injustice are not allowed to embitter but call on us to rejoice in the Lord and let our "forbearance be known unto all men."

"In nothing be anxious: but in everything [all needs and situations which arouse anxiety, fear and harassing care] by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." "Prayer is devout address to God in general, supplication is specific appeal for help, and request is the particular petition made."

"Greek philosophy sought in reason the prophylactic against care and fear; the true remedy is found in Christ" (Dummelow).

"Peace does not mean the end of all our striving,
Joy does not mean the drying of our tears;
Peace is the power that comes to souls arriving,
Up to the light where God himself appears.

"Joy is the wine that God is ever pouring,
Into the hearts of those who strive with him;
Lighting their eyes to vision and adoring,
Strengthening their arms to warfare glad and grim."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Cast them into the inner prison, Acts 16.24. Many prisons had deeper sections—dark and frequently without ventilation—perhaps underground. Sometimes stocks were built in the prison so that they were nothing more than an added help in making the prisoner secure, but often they were built so as to distend the legs, and then they became an instrument of torturing pain. John Henry Newman in Callisha describes a Roman prison consisting of two parts. "The first was the vestibule, or outward prison, approached

from the prætorium and surrounded by cells opening into it. The prisoners who were confined in these cells had the benefit of the air and light which the hall admitted. From the vestibule there was a passage into the interior prison. The utter darkness, the heat and stench of this miserable place, in which the inmates were confined day and night, is often dwelt upon by the martyrs and their biographers."

Suddenly there was an earthquake, Acts 16.26. Luke believes this to be a miraculous interposition. Ramsay affirms that just the effects recorded in the narrative would have been caused by an earthquake in a prison such as this one is likely to have been—"including the forcing of the doors and the loosening of the attachments of the prisoners' chains to the walls."

The Victors in the Famous Battle at Philippi

Drew his sword and was about to kill himself, Acts 16.27. Philippi is famous in the annals of suicide. Here Cassius, unable to survive defeat, covered his face in the empty tent, and ordered his freedman to strike the blow. See The Historical Background of the last lesson. His messenger, Titinius, held it to be "a Roman's part" to follow the stern example. Here Brutus bade adieu to his friends, exclaiming, "Certainly we must fly, yet not with the feet, but with the hands"; and many, whose names have never reached us, ended their last struggle for the republic by self-inflicted death. Here, too, another despairing man would have committed the same crime, had not his hand been arrested by an apostle's voice.—Conybeare and Howson.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

"Why is it that you so readily move people to tears, while I am unable to make any effect upon them?" a minister once asked a successful actor. "Because I speak fiction as though it were truth, while you speak truth as though it were fiction!" the great actor replied.

You are dealing with great truths; do you believe and therefore speak? That Philippian jailor who had heard Paul and Silas singing hymns in the night knew that their trust in God was sure, and because they so evidently believed they could speak effectively. "Do we appreciate our own message?" asks Dr. Jowett. "Do we look as though we revelled in it? There is nothing so helps a man to a good meal as to sit down with a man who enjoys a good appetite. And there is nothing so alluring to people, when we desire to show them how gracious the Lord is, as to let them see we revel in the diet. 'Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord.' And why is he blessed? Because his delight is contagious, his enthusiasm is catching. When we see a man bubbling over and delighting in God, we ourselves begin to be unsealed."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

INITIAL VICTORIES IN EUROPE

Beginning the Lesson. There is much to be said for Paul in his work at Philippi, which was the introduction to his work in Europe. In restoring the maiden to her right mind he won a victory over the cupidity and greed of men. In remaining untroubled in mind, full of joy and peace, in spite of apparent defeat, imprisonment and distress of body, he won a great victory for himself over outward circumstances. In bringing the keeper of the prison to a knowledge of Jesus and his service, he won another great victory.

The monument of Paul's visit to Philippi, however, was the church which grew out of that visit. In reading his letter to that church one catches glimpses of a quality of faith and courage, of tenderness and benevolence, which made this church Paul's favorite. They were Christians after his own heart. They were a liberal people—four times they gave Paul financial help. He emphatically refused any gifts of this sort from other churches and steadfastly adhered to his purpose to support himself by his trade as tentmaker while he preached the gospel. But the Philippians gave him their love as well as their gifts, and Paul rejoiced in their liberality, their sincerity and their affection. Read the Epistle to the Philippians.

Paul made the best use of present circumstances and of existing material. Many people find alibis instead of achievements in untoward conditions. Too many quarrel with the material available or with crippling circumstances with which they are compelled to work. To be able to bend unpromising conditions to serve one's highest purpose is one of life's greatest victories.

What Philippi Meant to Paul. Philippi was far more to Paul than a woman's prayer meeting on the riverside; more than the conversion of a rich purple-vendor of Thyatira; more than a conflict with the civil authorities in a prison episode gloriously ending in midnight praises and shaking prison walls. It was an introduction to new and impelling world forces which, to his vigorous and impressible spirit, meant change of front and of attitude and enlargement of powers. Philippi must henceforth be to him a strategic center from which must issue far-reaching projects and activities. Some ten years later he wrote to this church of his own establishing, the wonderful love letter, the Epistle to the Philippians, which abounds in the impressions received during his residence among them and his still optimistic confidence in their proving competent to any task to which it might callenge them.—Charles R. Foster, in the Methodist Quarterly Review.

Paul's Indomitable Soul. Paul was small of stature and weak in appearance, but compounded all of pluck. He may have been feeble with fever at times, or he may have suffered with some chronic complaint, or he may have been subject to recurrent attacks, but nevertheless he must have had a physical fiber in him which was capable of most extraordinary endurance. As a mere physical achievement his life-work seldom has been equaled among men. The secret of his career is to be found in his indomitable soul and his complete consecration. Difficulties might multiply, friends might dissuade, everything might seem to be in opposition, and yet when Paul saw his duty clearly set before him he went straight forward without swerving.

He had something of the serene indifference to all consequences involved in

his obedience to the law of his Lord which is characteristic of the ocean tides and the stellar courses. Paul lived as they, in the absoluteness of his obedience and the singleness of his devotion. Paul attained a "mighty life" because he was a man of mighty powers concentrated upon a single aim. That aim was the conversion of men to the practice of the holy life consequent upon a genuine faith in his risen and triumphant Lord. That made him the world's greatest missionary. D. A. Hayes, in Paul and his Epistles.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. Is Andrew Fuller right in saying that a man has only as much religion as he can command in time of trouble?

2. Is suicide ever justifiable?

3. The most sensitive part of civilized man is his pocket.—William Ramsay.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What influences would lead Paul to make Thessalonica his next preaching center? 2. Why did he not stop to preach at Amphipolis and Apollonia? 3. What is the modern name of Thessalonica, and why is it familiar to us? 4. In what sense was it true that Paul was turning the world upside down? 5. What are some of the things that need to be revolutionized in our city? 6. Are we the ones to do it? 7. Was Paul boasting in the words which we study from his letter to the Thessalonians? 8. For what purpose were they spoken? 9. Were they justifiable?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

A JAILOR LED CAPTIVE

Beginning the Lesson. There was a maid at Philippi "having a spirit of divination." What do you think that meant? (Continue with Topic I of Explanations and Comments.)

Do we have anything which corresponds to that "spirit of divination"? In Leviticus 19.31 there is a caution against patronizing such people. It reads: Turn ye not unto them that have familiar spirits, nor unto the wizards: seek ye them not out to be defiled by them: I am Jehovah your God. In our modern language this reads: "Never go to a medium or a fortune teller. Never defile yourselves by consulting them. I am Jehovah your God."

"The going to fortune tellers and palmists and consulting mediums is contrary to Christian teaching and is casting a slight on God's goodness. (This does not apply to harmless fun where it is known as fun.)

"A great many people place their lives in the guidance and keeping of designing people of this sort, which is both foolish and wrong. Such a prying into the future is discouraged throughout the Bible. The only One who should guide your life after you are grown is the Holy Spirit, and that guidance you can obtain by prayer and by striving to do God's will."

(Continue with the rest of Explanations and Comments, but let pupils themselves tell the story by answering your questions.)

A Chinese Christian. A Chinese Christian who used to be a soothsayer was talking recently about his earlier experiences. "It was much easier to make a living as a soothsayer," he said. "'How is it that you gave up that fine business?' men now ask me; 'you managed so well to cast a man's nativity, to choose days, and to predict our lucky and unlucky days, and now you are selling these foreign books; and since they are in the country, the gods have sent us plague and famine in their wrath.' 'Listen to me, my honoroble brethren,' I answer. 'No soothsayer knows his own fate, and how should he know that of other people? Since I have read this small book, I know my destiny to be a saved child of God, and that makes my future life bright and hopeful, because I found in this Gospel my Savior.'"

The Jailor Led Captive to Jesus. Instead of a sudden and hopeless death, the jailor received at the hands of his prisoners the gift both of temporal and spiritual life. The loud exclamation of Paul, "Do thyself no harm; for we are all here," gave immediate reassurance to the terrified man. He laid aside his sword, and called for a light, and rushed to the "inner prison" where Paul and Silas were confined. But now a new fear of a higher kind took possession of his soul. The recollection of all he had heard before concerning these prisoners and all that he had observed of their demeanor when he brought

them into the dungeon, the shuddering thought of the earthquake, the burst of his gratitude towards them as the preservers of his life, and the consciousness that even in the darkness of midnight they had seen his intention of suicide,—all these mingling and conflicting emotions made him feel that he was in the presence of a higher power. He fell down before them and brought them out, as men whom he had deeply injured and insulted, to a place of greater freedom and comfort; and then he asked them, with earnest anxiety, what he must do to be saved. The awakening of his conscience, the presence of the unseen world, the miraculous visitation of the nearness of death,—coupled perhaps with some confused recollection of the "Way of Salvation" which these strangers were said to have been proclaiming,—were enough to suggest that momentous inquiry: "What must I do to be saved?" Their answer was that of faithful apostles: they preached "not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord." "Believe, not in us, but in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved; and not only thou, but the like faith shall bring salvation to all thy house."—Conybeare and Howson.

"How the Jailor at Philippi was Caught." One night in St. Louis, Dwight L. Moody preached on the Philippian jailor, and the next morning the Globe-Democrat reported the sermon under a sensational headline—"How the Jailor at Philippi was Caught." A copy of the paper was carried into the city jail and fell into the hands of a notorious prisoner named Valentine Burke. The result I condense from Mr. Moody's words.

This man was one of the worst characters known to the St. Louis police. He was about forty years old at that time, had spent about twenty years in jail, and was then awaiting trial on another serious charge. As Burke glanced over the morning paper the headline caught his eye. Thinking that it was some jail news, he began to read it. He was so anxious to see how the jailor was caught. He thought he had once passed through a town called Philippi, in Illinois, and supposed this was the place referred to.

Every now and then he came across the words, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." That text was quoted nine times in the sermon.

Burke wondered what had happened to the Globe-Democrat, and looked at the date. It was that morning's paper all right. He was disgusted, but he could not shake off that text—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." God used it to convict him, and a sense of his responsibility before God rushed upon him. There in his cell at midnight he prayed for the first time in his life. On the following Sunday he talked with the Christian friends who held service in the jail, and was led into the light of the gospel.

From that night Burke was a changed man. For some months after his release he tried to find work, but no one would take him, knowing his past history. He went to New York, but was unsuccessful and returned to St. Louis. One day Burke received a message from the sheriff that he was wanted at the court house. He obeyed with a heavy heart. "Some old case they've got against me," he said; "but if I'm guilty I'll tell them so. I've done lying."

The sheriff greeted him kindly. "Where have you been, Burke?" "In New York." "What have you been doing there?" "Trying to find an honest job." "Have you kept a good grip on the religion you told me about?" inquired the sheriff. "Yes," answered Burke; "I've had a hard time, Sheriff, but I haven't lost my religion."

"Burke," said the sheriff, "I have had you shadowed ever since you left jail. I suspected your religion was a fraud. But I am convinced that you are sincere, as you've lived an honest life, and I have sent for you to offer you a deputyship under me. You can begin at once."

Sentence Sermons. Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.—Paul.

A Scout smiles and whistles under all difficulties.—Scout Law.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up and Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where was Thessalonica? Berœa? 2. What letters did Paul write to the churches he founded in Thessalonica? 3. What is the meaning of the charge made in Acts 17.6? 4. What charge made against Jesus is recalled by that in Acts 17.7? 5. What did the Philippians do for Paul while at Thessalonica, as told in Phil. 4.16? 6. What two kinds of hearers does our text show us?

LESSON III—OCTOBER 18

PAUL IN THESSALONICA AND BERŒA

GOLDEN TEXT: Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. Psalm 119.18

LESSON Acts 17.1-15; 1 Thessalonians 2.1-12

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 119.9-16

ACTS 17.1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

5 But the Jews, being moved with jealousy, took unto them certain vile fellows of the rabble, and gathering a crowd, set the city on an uproar; and assaulting the house of Jason, they sought to bring them forth to the people. 6 And when they found them not, they dragged Jason and certain brethren before the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; 7 whom Jason hath received: and these all act contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, "one" Jesus. 8 And they troubled the multitude and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. 9 And when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berœa: who when they were come thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11 Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so.

1 THESSALONIANS 2.7 But we were gentle in the midst of you, as when a nurse cherisheth her own children: 8 even so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were well pleased to impart unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were become very dear to us. 9 For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail: working night and day, that we might not burden any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. 10 Ye are witnesses, and God "also," how holily and righteously and unblamably we behaved ourselves toward you that believe: 11 as ye know how we "dealt with" each one of you, as a father with his own children, exhorting you, and encouraging "you," and testifying, 12 to the end that ye should walk worthily of God, who calleth you into his own kingdom and glory.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The First Results at Thessalonica, Acts 17.1-4. It was Paul's plan to evangelize the leading trade and governmental centers, relying upon the spread of the gospel from these rallying points to the whole region round about. His words to the Thessalonians show that this is what happened at Thessalonica, 1 Thess. 1.8. He went from Philippi to Thessalonica and remained there some time, carrying on a most successful work, as we learn from his letters to the church he founded.

Luke, our historian, records only Paul's preaching for three successive Sabbaths in the synagogue, where, he says, Paul "reasoned with them from the Scriptures"; that is, he cited Scripture passages which were prophetic of the Christ, showed that Jesus fulfilled these prophecies, that it behooved the Christ to suffer and to rise again from the dead; and thus he reasoned, or argued, that Jesus whom he proclaimed to them is the Christ.

The result of Paul's preaching was that some of the Jews and devout Greeks (Greeks who attended the synagogue services and worshiped God), also many of the chief women, were convinced of the truth of the message and "consorted with Paul and Silas," cast their lot in with them and shared their way of life.

II. An Uproar Fomented by Jews, Acts 17.5-9. Here again it was the Jews who opposed Paul. They were jealous, as everywhere they were of Paul's success, and, gathering a crowd of idle loafers, they set the city in an uproar. These "vile fellows of the rabble," as Luke calls them, neither knew nor cared anything about Paul's work nor about the jealousy of the Jews, but if there was to be any kind of rioting, they wanted to be in it. The Greek word "agoraioi," translated "rabble," comes from "agora," market-place: they were men of the market-place, market-loafers, idlers who had no business of their

own, and were ready for any kind of excitement or mischief that might turn up.

> Every city has its loafers, idle hangers-on of the streets who may not intend any evil course, and may, indeed, escape from committing evil, but who are certain to deteriorate sadly. "Believe me when I tell you that thrift of time will repay you in after life with a usury of profit beyond your most sanguine dreams," said Gladstone; "and that the waste of it will make you dwindle, alike in intellectual and moral stature, beyond your darkest reckoning."

The house of Jason, where Paul was staying, was mobbed. Not finding the apostles there, the rabble dragged Jason and certain brethren before the rulers of the city and charged them with sedition and treason. Jason had received into his house those who "turned the world upside down," they cried. "It was the first mob crying, Down with these Bolsheviks! In their eyes Paul and Silas were 'reds,' dangerous radicals. It was their 'scale of values' that was up-side-down: the people of the city were esteeming and living for the wrong things; and the effort of Paul was to enable them to see the right things to live for" (Richard Roberts).

> There is food for thought in the sermon which one of Wesley's followers preached from this text. This is his outline: "First, the world is wrong way up; second, it has got to be turned upside down; third, we're the chaps to do it."

Moreover, the apostles had proclaimed "another King, one Jesus," so the rabble cried. This was a grave charge, punishable with death. In Philippi, a Roman colony, "they were accused of introducing new customs ('illicita religio'), which Roman citizens were not permitted to observe, but Thessalonica was not a Roman colony, and therefore such an accusation could have no force there. Accordingly, the charge here preferred against them is treason against Cæsar ('crimen majestatis')." From his letters to the Thessalonians we know that Paul often spoke about the Kingdom of God and about the second coming of Christ, and such were the words, doubtless, which gave rise to this charge.

The rulers of the city were greatly disturbed. They feared the Roman authorities higher up. "Claudius, who then held the reins of government, is represented by Suetonius as a man very jealous of the least commotion and timorous to the last degree, which obliged the rulers under him to be watchful against anything that looked dangerous" (Matthew Henry). The rulers must, however, have felt that the charge lacked sufficient evidence, for they took security from Jason and the rest and let them go.

"They took bond of Jason that there would be no more rioting in the city, and there was only one method by which Jason could prevent rioting; it was to put a stop to the preaching. This was a very ingenious device. If Paul continued his ministry, he would endanger the man who had generously taken him to his house and cared for him. So Paul retreated from Thessalonica."

III. On to Berœa, Acts 17.10-12. The brethren at Thessalonica immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night, for the danger for them in Thessalonica was very real. Under cover of darkness they were hurried to Berœa, a small, out-of-way town fifty miles from Thessalonica.

It must have been refreshing to Paul to find the people in the synagogue at Berœa so open-minded and teachable. Without pre-judging and without envy, the Berœans gave a fair and impartial hearing to Paul's message, receiving the word with all readiness of mind. They were more noble than those in Thessalonica, Luke affirms: their nobility consisted in their humility of mind, their willingness to learn, their patience to hear, their wish to understand and to tolerate the new in teacher and message.

They examined the Scriptures (the Old Testament) daily to see for themselves whether the things which Paul taught were so, looking up passages in the prophets to ascertain whether their presentation of the Messiah's coming agreed with the story of the life and sufferings and death of Jesus Christ whom Paul preached unto them. "Here we have a noteworthy instance of private

judgment. Even an apostle's word is not to be taken for granted. The noble Berœans were ready to listen and then diligently to examine into the grounds of what was said" (Cambridge Bible).

"True faith is not blind credulity—it does not dispense with reason, evidence and argument. It is a Christian virtue to prove all things with sincerity and earnestness, to investigate, to institute a thorough search. And the authority of a teacher and pastor should never prevail to such an extent that the hearer is expected to dispense with personal search and with personal convictions of his own conscience as soon as the former has spoken" (Lange).

Many Christians depend for their opinions upon their favorite ministers, the leaders of their own party, some advocate of an especial dogma, or some author of prominence, all apart from any careful thinking of their own and without any allowance for bias. The opinions of men are to be weighed and balanced and integrated with one's own judgments even when they are the opinions of wise and prominent men.

After their own study of the Scriptures, many of the Jews and many Greeks and Greek women of honorable estate believed. "In Macedonia, as in Asia Minor, women occupied a much freer and more influential position than in Athens. Men of all classes were impressed by the teaching of Paul, but only women of the leading families; and the difference is obviously due to the fact that the poorer women were most likely to be under the sway of superstition" (William M. Ramsay).

IV. Work Ended in Macedonia, Acts 17.13-15. When the hostile Jews at Thessalonica heard of Paul's success in Berœa they came thither and again stirred up trouble. For safety Paul was sent by Christians of Berœa to the sea and accompanied to Athens. By his Berœan escort Paul sent word back to Silas and Timothy, who had remained behind, to join him at once. Thus ended Paul's work in Macedonia. From each city where he had preached he had been driven away by persecution, but in establishing churches at Philippi, Thessalonica and Berœa he had in reality taken possession of the province of Macedonia.

V. Paul's Manner of Living at Thessalonica, 1 Thess. 2.7-12. From Thessalonica Paul went to Athens and preached and then on to Corinth. In the latter city he stayed a year and six months, and during that time wrote both his letters to the Thessalonians. Certain of Paul's enemies in Thessalonica had charged him with sophistry, claiming that he used deceit and flattery, and with charlatanism, asserting that he planned to make money out of his converts. In the second chapter of his first letter to the church there he indignantly declares that "neither at any time were we found using words of flattery, nor a cloak of covetousness." And then he sets down in retrospect an account of his conduct while among them. He asks them to remember just how he had behaved on that visit of his. Paul points out (in verse 6) that he might have made a display of his apostolic authority and by virtue of the dignity of his office he might have required them to provide support for himself and his companions (see 1 Cor. 9). But instead of walking apart in self-importance, we were "gentle among you," living mildly and lovingly in your midst. To make the charge that he sought his own profit or honor appear still more impossible, he uses a word (nurse) which means "nursing mother" to picture his attitude: he had had all the solicitude of a nursing mother for her own child. Note the addition of "own" to accentuate the affection and devotion of the mother who never seeks profit or honor for her mother's tenderness, not even asking for love in return, but is wholly bent on bestowing her care on those she cherishes.

The apostle was willing and eagerly ready to do not only what his duty required of him, "impart unto them the gospel," but because of the deep affection he held for them he was eager also to give them "his own soul."

Paul next replies to the slander of covetousness by reminding them that he had earned his own living. We are not to suppose that by "laboring day and night" Paul means that he preached all day and carried on his manual labor at night, but that he labored incessantly. It may be presumed that Paul worked

here in Thessalonica as a tentmaker (Acts 18:3; 20.34; 1 Cor. 4.12; 2 Cor. 11.8; Eph. 4.28). He had not taken even the necessities of life from them, working with his own hands that his ministry there might be altogether one of giving and not of receiving. He did not always do this (2 Cor. 11.8), and even while in Thessalonica he received presents from the church at Philippi (Phil. 4.16).

Notice how Paul dares call upon them to bear their testimony, from observing him: "ye yourselves know" (v.2), "as ye know" (v.2), "for ye remember" (v.9), "ye are witnesses" (v.10), "as ye know" (v.11). Only genuine sincerity in living and the determined purpose to be true to one's self can produce the courage to seek vindication of one's living from those who have intimately shared one's life. In his dealings with them Paul declares he had lived in their midst "holily" (with evident reverence for God) and "righteously" (with just and honorable concern for all men), and "unblamably." Even as a father he had exhorted and encouraged and charged every one to talk worthily of God.

This passage is full of self-praise and self-defense. How far should one try to clear himself of unjust imputations? Paul is concerned to justify himself only as criticisms hinder the gospel or prejudice the faith and love of the disciples. To want self-justification for mere personal satisfaction or gratification is alien from the spirit of Paul. Much self-praise lacks this personal disinterestedness and much self-defense is not keyed up to the advance of truth so much as to personal pride or to the feeling of pique. Paul's longing for these Thessalonians was the normal expression of his passionate desire to have them believe and follow Christ.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

From Philippi, Paul and his companions passed through the cities of Amphipolis and Apollonia on their way to Thessalonica. Amphipolis was some thirty-five miles southwest of Philippi, and Apollonia thirty miles farther on toward Thessalonica. At Apollonia the Egnatian Road which they followed (The Via Egnatia, which connected the Adriatic with the Hellespont), turned almost due west to Thessalonica. It was forty miles from Philippi to Thessalonica. Paul and his company may have been five days only on the way.

A Street in Old Salonica

Thessalonica lies in sight of Mount Olympus, the fabled home of Zeus and other Grecian deities. It was the capital of the province of Macedonia and a flourishing commercial city in Paul's time. Today it is still flourishing and is known by its abbreviated name of Salonica, or Saloniki. Its main street, the Grande Rue de Vardas, was once part of the Via Egnatia. Remains of two imperial arches built more than fifteen hundred years ago still span the street. During the Great War it was the base of the Allies' operations in Macedonia.

Berœa was a small town off the Egnatian highway. It still exists with a

population of about twenty thousand. It is probable that its obscurity and seclusion were two of the reasons why it was chosen as Paul's field of operation at this time, offering as it did an asylum for him after the exacting experiences at Philippi and Thessalonica.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Are you perhaps interpreting the Bible to your pupils as it was interpreted to you in your childhood, without ever examining it yourself to see whether those things are so? The method of the Berœans is for you. And Paul's word to the Thessalonians is for you: Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

WINNING THROUGH LOVE

Beginning the Lesson. "There is a certain mechanics, so to speak, in carrying on missionary work, as in everything else," so Dr. Gaius Glenn Atkins writes in the Sunday School World. "Paul always needed a place to sleep and something to eat, and one did not travel for nothing. The Book of Acts makes a good deal of the lodging places of Paul. He was a guest of one Jason in Thessalonica. Whether he was a 'paying guest' is another matter. I should think it likely that he lodged with members of the tentmakers' guild, some of whom he would always find in any considerable city. There were associations of craftsmen throughout the Roman Empire, certainly, a little later than Paul's time, and they welcomed fellow-craftsmen from strange places. If Paul lodged with a tentmaker, he could pay for his lodging by working between sermons.

A Pulpit at Salonica

"These old cities were close-built, with very narrow streets. The only open spaces within the walls were the market-places and the public forums. It was hard to find a place to get a crowd together, which is another reason why Paul used the synagogues, and although by this time he must have been almost certain what would happen, he was a man of unconquerable hope. In spite of his breaks with his fellow-countrymen, Paul was still loyal to his race and his inheritance. You do not easily dig a man's ancestry out of him, and least of all when he is a Jew. His heart's desire, Paul said much later, was for Israel, and though he never attained his heart's desire, it was not his fault."

Briefly recall the incidents connected with his stay at Thessalonica, and then turn to our excerpt from Paul's first letter to the church there.

Does it seem to you that Paul talks overmuch in this letter of himself and his manner of life among the people of Thessalonica? Does he seem to you to boast? We need to remember that this letter was not written to the world but was a pastor's personal word to his flock, a friend's word to friends. He could appeal to them in this way in order to justify himself against misunderstanding, opposition and slander. They knew how he had lived among them; they knew that he was but telling sober fact when he declared that he had

lived a life devout, upright, unblamable in every respect, that he had worked among working men that he might win some.

Thou Shalt Love. "Thou shalt love," says Jesus, repeating an ancient saying which was familiar to his hearers. Love, that is to say, has in it an element of compulsion. It is a categorical imperative. There is an obligation to be kind, generous, affectionate. Does not this seem at first to strike a discordant note? Can there be compulsion in affection? Can you prefix the words "thou shalt" to the great word "love"? You cannot take a boy and shake him and say: "You must love your parents, you must kneel down and tell God you love him." Is there not in one's affections an essential quality of spontaneity, and when one regards them as obligations, does he not rob them of their fragrance and charm?

All this seems plausible enough, until one remembers the teaching of Jesus concerning the place of the will in the formation of character. His primary appeal is not to the reason or the emotions, but to the will. "Obedience," as Robertson said, is, to Jesus, the "organ of spiritual knowledge." "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." Modern philosophy speaks of the "will to believe"; Jesus would speak of the will to love. Much of the ungenerous lovelessness of life proceeds, not from essential repulsion or irresistible conviction, but from the failure to apply the will to love. A man and wife promise to love each other, but they make no effort of the will toward the maintenance of love, and drift apart, until of a sudden a home is ruined. A man feels sulky and out of spirits as he rises in the morning, and excuses himself for this attitude toward the world as though it were quite impossible to be friendly in the forenoon. Two friends fly into a passion, and it does not occur to them to apply their wills to reconciliation. The very love of God is often obscured from a human soul, not by an eclipse of theology or philosophy, but simply because the soul does not apply its own will to open its own eyes. "Thou shalt love," says Jesus. Sympathy, appreciation, magnanimity, are not luxuries, but obligations. You have no right to be sulky, suspicious, loveless. Apply the will to the affections. You may be called to be unhappy, but you are never called to be unlovely.—From Mornings in the College Chapel, by Francis Greenwood Peabody.

The Twentieth Century Missionary an Incarnation of Goodwill and Brotherhood. In the basic thing, of course, the twentieth century missionary makes the same contribution that was made by his predecessor of a hundred years ago. Now, as then, he is the bearer of a message about God and the meaning of life as revealed in Christ. In two ways, however, the missionary today makes a distinctive contribution that his earlier forerunners could not so clearly make.

When Carey went to India, there were no volcanic problems between Great Britain and India. Today his successor has the complex and delicate task of serving as an interpreter of Christ while there is acute political difficulty between the land of his birth and the land of his adoption. When Guido Verbeck went from America to Japan there was no immigration act excluding Japanese from the United States. Today Gilbert Bowles and William Axling must do their Christian work in the midst of tensions between East and West; they must represent a loftier American spirit than that which wrote a discriminatory law. When Peter Parker worked in China no American marines or gunboats lay in Shanghai harbor. Today Bishop Roots and Leighton Stuart represent Christ among a people demanding of every Western government the recognition of its political equality; they have to be true at the same time to the higher interests of both America and China.

But while all this makes the task of the missionary more difficult, it gives an additional value to his work. He is now an incarnation of goodwill and brotherhood in the face of all political complications. He is the "demonstrator of a citizenship higher than any from which he comes or to which he goes." He is "the symbol of an international political relationship as well as the herald of a universal religious relationship." He has the opportunity of being the most reconciling person in the world!

The primitive missionary, we are again reminded, was not much troubled by the conflict of varying cultures. East and West were in separated worlds.

Today, when the world is a unit, the culture of the land from which the missionary comes and that of the land to which he goes are crowding against each other and some sort of a blended world-culture seems certain to arise. In that process the discerning missionary tries to represent the best in Western culture, as opposed to the questionable or the flimsy, and to discover appreciatively the abiding values in Oriental culture too precious to be lost.

The missionary today, in addition to all else that he is, is the "agent of international Christian sharing," the colleague of men of other nations in a joint quest for a world-culture permeated by the spirit of Christ.—Editorial in The Federal Council Bulletin.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. The Bible will stand any honest searching. "Prejudice is not its friend, but candid and deeply earnest investigation leads men to a deeper and truer acceptance of its message."

2. First Thessalonians.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why was it that Paul came to Corinth in a discouraged mood? (Read the preceding chapter of Acts.) 2. What was the result of Paul's preaching in Athens? 3. What great games were celebrated near Corinth? 4. Why did Paul need companions with him in every place? 5. What sources of cheer and inspiration came to him at Corinth? 6. In what respects was Corinth a difficult field for missionary work? 7. Can a corrupt modern city be reformed?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

TWO KINDS OF HEARERS

Beginning the Lesson. Do you know who founded Providence, Rhode Island? A writer in the Brown Alumni Monthly has given this account of the way in which Roger Williams came there:

In 1635 Roger Williams was summoned to appear before the general court at Salem to answer the charge of maintaining dangerous opinions. After what can hardly be termed a trial, he was adjudged guilty of having "broached and divulged diverse new and dangerous opinions against the authority of magistrates," and sentence of banishment was passed against him. He was granted leave to remain in Salem till spring, provided he would not "go about to draw others to his opinions," but as many resorted to his house to hear him it was held that he had violated the condition and he was ordered to go to Boston. As he declined to do so, Captain John Underhill was despatched with a sloop to Salem to arrest him, and to put him on ship for deportation to England. Receiving friendly warning, Williams left Salem in the night with two companions and fled through the wilderness. He passed the rest of the winter on the banks of the Seekonk River, and in the spring with five companions he founded a new settlement which he named Providence, "in grateful remembrance of God's merciful providence to me in my distress," as he said. At once an order was made that no one should be molested for his conscience, and in this humble way was founded the first commonwealth based on the great principle of perfect religious liberty.

This account of Roger Williams's experience closely parallels that of Paul at Thessalonica, when his gospel was held by some of the people to be contrary to the authority of magistrates. Who were the men who complained about Paul's preaching? How did they attempt to seize Paul? Why did they fail? Of what did they accuse Paul? What did they mean by this? What was the result of it all to Paul?

Two Kinds of Hearers. Paul's experience in Berœa was very different from that in Thessalonica. What was it? Why were his hearers in Berœa said to be more noble than those in Thessalonica? They were more open-minded, more ready to listen and judge for themselves whether or not what they heard was true. It is a sign of true nobility when one is able to listen to another and not allow his own opinion, his prejudice, his limited viewpoint, to prevent his seeing the other side of the question.

With the prejudiced Jews in Thessalonica it was not a question of Paul's telling the truth. It was not the truth that they wanted. They were afraid of what might happen to them; their leadership was in peril; selfish interests of their own might be affected. They listened, not to learn the truth, but to

prevent any teaching gaining currency which would lead to any loss by them.

Many hearers listen today, not to learn but to oppose. They are prejudiced. "Prejudice" means "pre-judging"; the prejudiced person has pre-judged the matter, he has already determined what he will believe, no matter what any one may say. This is often due to some selfish consideration.

It may be self-conceit. When people think more highly of themselves than they ought to think, they are inclined to discount other people's views and so, never listen to learn. We can have opinions of our own and be willing to listen sympathetically to the opinions of others and learn from them.

It may be self-delusion. Superstition, ignorance, childish credulity, often make a person a hearer without discrimination, ready to accept anything said. Very different was the attitude of the Bercœan listeners. What sort of hearers were they? It will mean much to our own lives and much to the Kingdom of God if we learn to be like the Bercœans who listened with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily whether these things were so.

The Bercœan Band. In England there is a "Bercœan Band" among the churches, every member of which is pledged to learn accurately at least one verse of the Bible each week. Here is what the Bishop of Durban once said to the members of the Band:

"Why should I make it my rule and my habit, as far as I can, to 'learn by heart' verses, passages, chapters, of the Bible, getting them printed on my mind word for word? I should do so because the practice is actually suggested in the Holy Scriptures. Look at Psalm 119. There in verse 11 (our Golden Text), you read how the Psalmist 'hid the Word in his heart.' That is, to turn the Hebrew phrase into English meaning, he stored it, he lodged it, in his thought. Practically, this comes to what we mean by 'learning by heart,' if we take these words to imply not only memory, but the use of memory, for the soul's good.

"Let me bear witness for myself to the precious benefits of learning the Bible by heart. Almost my first distinct recollection of anything is the saying Christmas texts to my mother on Christmas Day—at least sixty-one years ago. Then in later life I was encouraged to learn whole chapters and whole epistles, word for word. I think I could still say the Philippians through correctly in English and Greek, and large parts of Hebrews, and I still commit fresh portions to memory, particularly the Psalms.

"What is the benefit of it? First, I humbly believe the presence of all this Bible in the inner mind does tend, by Grace, to sweeten it, like lavender in a linen-chest. And then, in silent and solitary moments, walking by the way, lying awake at night, how beautiful it is to be able to listen to the voice of God talking out of one's memory into the mind and soul! Ah, what a power it is to warn, to guide, to cheer! Many a moment that would be invaded by sin, or just withered by thoughts of sorrow, is turned into purity and hope by the verse, the psalm, the chapter, said 'by heart,' in silence or with sound. Thy Word have I stored in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.

"Learn your Bible. A 'step at a time,' a verse a day, or two verses, or ten, as your memory may serve; what a treasure you will gather up ere long! And the Lord of the Word will meet you through the Word, and make your memory his telephone for the very voice of Heaven."

Sentence Sermons.

"The Word is like a deep, deep mine,
And jewels rich and rare
Are hidden in its mighty depths
For every searcher there."

My advice to you is that you cultivate an acquaintance with and a firm belief in the Holy Scriptures.—Benjamin Franklin.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up and Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How did Paul earn his living? 2. What have we heard of his supporting himself by working at his trade? 3. How do you think Paul made the acquaintance of Aquila and Priscilla? 4. What is the meaning of "was constrained," verse 5? 5. What did the act recorded in verse 6 signify? 6. Where have we heard of Paul's shaking the dust off his feet, and what did the gesture mean? 7. Where was it that Paul said that since the Jews thrust the gospel from them he would turn to the Gentiles?

LESSON IV—OCTOBER 25

PAUL IN CORINTH

GOLDEN TEXT: Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three: and the greatest of these is love. 1 Corinthians 13.13

LESSON Acts 18.1-17; 1 Corinthians 13

DEVOTIONAL READING 1 Corinthians 13.1-8, 13

ACTS 18 After these things he departed from Athens, and came to Corinth. 2 And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a man of Pontus by race, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome: and he came unto them; 3 and because he was of the same trade, he abode with them, and they wrought; for by their trade they were tentmakers. 4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks.

5 But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was constrained by the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. 6 And when they opposd themselves and blasphemed, he shook out his raiment and said unto them, Your blood "be" upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. 7 And he departed thence, and went into the house of a certain man named Titus Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. 8 And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. 9 And the Lord said unto Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace: 10 for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city. 11 And he dwelt "there" a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. Paul the Tentmaker, verses 1-3. Last week we left Paul at Berœa. From there he went to the province of Achaia and, following what must have been a very disappointing experience in Athens (see The Historical Background), came to Corinth. At Corinth he took up his abode with Aquila and Priscilla who were tentmakers by occupation. That was Paul's trade and he wrought with them. Aquila and Priscilla were Jews and although born in Pontus, the province in Asia Minor bordering on the Black Sea, they had lately come from Rome because Claudius, the Emperor, had driven the Jews from that city on account of a series of disturbances, due, as Suetonius says, "to the action of Chrestus." This must refer to some outbreak of messianic enthusiasm among the Jews, or to some disturbance occasioned by Christian teaching.

Here at Corinth Paul's ministry lasted eighteen months. He worked at his trade of tentmaking by day and preached at night. Just what Paul's trade was is a matter of doubt. Luther translated the word "carpet manufacturer." Chrysostom describes Paul as standing in his workshop and stitching hides of leather together with his hands. It is generally thought that he made tentcloth from the hair of goats which was called Cilician cloth from the fact that it was made in Cilicia, which was Tarsus, Paul's native home.

> A Jewish proverb reads, "He that teaches not his son a trade does the same as if he taught him to be a thief."
>
> "It was not Paul the preacher whom Aquila and Priscilla first knew, but Paul the workman—the man of business. They saw him in his working clothes and business transactions, and in his private life. And it is surely one of the greatest achievements of Christian character and testimony to win the person who lives under the same roof and sees you in your off-times and in the privacy of your home" (Charles Brown).

II. Preaching to Jews and Greeks, verses 4, 5. In spite of many discouragements and of physical weakness (1 Cor. 2.3-5), the lonely missioner "reasoned" in the synagogue every Sabbath, seeking to persuade Jews and Greeks to accept his teaching. The "Greeks" were proselytes in the synagogue, as the distinction of verse six shows.

The effect upon Paul of the coming of Silas and Timothy, who had remained in Macedonia, was electric; encouraged by their presence, his spirits revived

and his whole activity became more intense. Paul was a social soul. He worked best in harness with others.

"We are rich or poor, not as we are possessed of money and what money can buy, but in the wealth of our friendships" (Arthur Porritt).

Perhaps Silas and Timothy brought a contribution toward his support from his friends at Philippi (Phil. 4.13; 2 Cor. 11.9), and, thus relieved of the pressing necessity of incessant daily toil at tentmaking, he was able to devote himself more continually to preaching. The good news brought to him regarding the growth in Christian truth and practice in the churches of Macedonia made him more determined than ever to testify that Jesus is the Christ. He was constrained by the word: he not only had the word but the word had him, had him in its grip.

"It takes the whole of a man's mind and soul to be an effective preacher of the word, and anything else allowed to come in to divide attention or purpose will mar and maim the word. Anxiety over his own temporal affairs, as to how he is going to make ends meet, may spoil a man's liberty and joy. The cares of the world may choke the word not only in the hearer but in the preacher, and many a man has preached the better for being set free from grinding anxiety" (Charles Brown).

III. Turning to the Gentiles, verses 6, 7. The Jews opposed Paul and blasphemed. As Matthew Henry says, they could not argue against Paul's words but what they wanted in reason they made up in language. Paul then definitely decided to turn his efforts to the Gentiles. Professor Ramsay thinks that Paul did not manifest a very conciliatory spirit in dealing with the Jews in the synagogue. "This shaking out of his garments was undoubtedly a very exasperating gesture, and the occupying of a meeting-house next door to the synagogue" with Justus, one who was a Gentile, was not calculated to heal the breach.

IV. Paul Encouraged, verses 8-11. Despite his turning to the Gentiles, a noted Jew, Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, and all his house believed Paul's message and many other Corinthians believed and were baptized. Paul baptized Crispus with his own hands, 1 Cor. 1.14. "The contiguity of the new meeting-house for the Christians and the synagogue was not only fruitful in winning converts but also in raising disputes. The conversion of an important personage like Crispus led to increased opposition by the synagogue. It may have grown so bitter that Paul began to question whether he ought not to move on again." Then came the word of the Lord to him in a vision at night, encouraging him. "Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city."

It is never possible for our finite minds to judge the possibilities of a situation. Just when circumstances look least promising, God may say, "I have much people in this city." We need to work for the Kingdom undaunted by seeming impossibilities and undiscouraged by lagging success.

Paul needed more than all else the assurance that God was with him and God's grace and strength were his upon which to rely. With this assurance he was enabled to stay on in Corinth for a year and six months and give his message without fear or uncertainty. During these months he wrote his two letters to the Thessalonians, the first of his epistles that have come down to us.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

He found a certain Jew named Aquila with his wife Priscilla: and he came unto them and because he was of the same trade he abode with them, and they wrought, Acts 18.1-3. In Alexandria the different trades sat in the synagogue arranged into guilds; and Paul could have no difficulty in meeting in the bazaar of his trade with the like-minded Aquila and Priscilla, with whom to find a lodging.—Alfred Edersheim.

He was of the same trade, Acts 18.3. As it was often enjoined upon a son not

to forsake the trade of his father, perhaps from respect, perhaps because a similar trade might be more easily learnt at home, it is likely that Paul followed his father's trade, which both father and son might easily have learnt at Tarsus.—Schürer, in Jewish People.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

From Berœa Paul went on to Athens, where he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and preached in the market-place to all who would listen. Athens had a famous university and was the headquarters of various philosophical schools. Luke mentions the stoics and Epicureans, certain of whom encountered him and said, "What would this babbler say?" and others of whom said, "He seemeth to be a setter-forth of strange gods," because he preached Jesus and the resurrection.. Read his sermon in the seventeenth chapter of Acts.

"It would appear that Paul was disappointed and perhaps disillusioned by his experience in Athens," writes Professor Ramsay. "He felt that he had gone at least as far as was right in the way of presenting his doctrine in a form suited to the current philosophy, and the result had been little more than naught. When he went on from Athens to Corinth he no longer spoke in philosophic style. In replying afterwards to the unfavorable comparison between his preaching (in Corinth) and the more philosophical style of Apollos he told the Corinthians that when he came among them he 'determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ and him crucified,' 2.12." It may have been this concentrated emphasis on Christ the crucified Lord that brought about the organized opposition of the synagogue and Paul's withdrawal to minister to the Gentiles.

Corinth was the capital of the Roman province of Achaia and the seat of the Roman proconsul. It was destroyed in 146 B.C. by the Romans and was rebuilt a century later by Julius Cæsar. It was the glory of Greece in Paul's day. The great rock of Acrocorinthus towers above the plain on which Corinth was situated. Seven columns beautifully fluted of the ancient temple of Apollo, believed to be of the sixth century B.C., crown a low hill near the ancient site of Corinth. Recent excavations have uncovered the well-preserved pavement of a street flanked with the remains of colonnades and shops.

Ruins of a Street in Corinth
The Acrocorinthus in the Background

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Briefly review the geography of this second missionary journey. Make your pupils interested in the stages of progress. Use a large map if possible. If this is not possible, let each pupil turn to the map in their Bible. Let them study the country of Greece and notice the narrow isthmus which connects the Peloponnesus with the mainland, separating the Saronic Gulf (of the Ægean Sea) from the Gulf of Corinth (of the Adriatic). Then notice the location of Corinth, dominating the isthmus: "the City of the two seas" it was poetically called.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
CHRISTIANITY IN A COSMOPOLITAN CITY

Beginning the Lesson. We have a good picture of Corinth in the time of Paul in this excerpt from Paul and his Epistles, by D. A. Hayes:—

"The growth of the new city of Corinth was almost as rapid as that of Chicago

has been. The Ægean and the Ionian Seas contributed to its wealth. The popular route from east to west ran this way. It was quite customary for passengers to break their sea voyage by disembarking at one of the seaports on the isthmus and visiting Corinth on their way to the other. It soon outstripped Athens in size and became in some respects the most important city of Greece. It was made the capital of the Roman province of Achaia. As the center of government, and the seat of commerce, unrivaled in wealth and in size, Corinth was the place where any new movement, once established, would be sure to exert an influence over the whole land.

"With these various nationalities, with no traditions, with no aristocracy, a mushroom city with no higher aim than the making of money and the exhibiting of pleasures and the enjoyment of life, Corinth soon established a reputation for profligacy which was unrivaled in the ancient world. Chrysostom said it was 'the most licentious city of all that are or ever have been.' Farrar has pronounced Corinth 'the Vanity Fair of the Roman Empire; at once the London and the Paris of the first century after Christianity. In the Gentile world it was famous [infamous] for dishonesty, debauchery, and drunkenness.'

"Another modern writer has compared Corinth to 'an amalgam of Newmarket, Chicago, and Paris.' It had the worst features of each, all mixed together. At night its streets were hideous with the brawls and lewd songs of drunken revelry. In the daytime its markets and squares swarmed with Jewish peddlers, foreign traders, sailors, soldiers, athletes in training, boxers, wrestlers, charioteers, racing men, betting men, courtesans, slaves, idlers, and parasites of every description—a veritable pandemonium."

The preacher and his message faced a seemingly impossible task here at Corinth. It is evidence of the vitality of Paul's Christianity that he could come into such a city and succeed in winning for Christ a strong group of men and women and in building them into an influential Christian church.

It was Paul's recognition that city men determined in large degree the history of nations and the success of religions which led him to put most of his missionary labor into the cities of his day. He seemed to feel that if the cities could be won, his cause would triumph and Christianity would become the religion of the whole Roman Empire.

The great problem of Christianity is the evangelization of the city. More than half of all our people in America are in the city and more are coming every day. We must find the way in church organization, program and personnel to give our great cosmopolitan cities the message of Jesus.

A Great Modern Cosmopolitan City. New York! A fold that has multiplied one hundred and twenty times the original size in a hundred years. A fold that has increased itself not from within, of its own kind, but from without, from people of all nations, coming from all directions, black men from Africa, yellow men from Asia, Slavs from Russia, Celts, Teutons, Gauls, Romans, Iberians; people from the yellow sand deserts of Syria, people from the green and snow-clad mountains of Switzerland, Lowland people, Highland people, the worst and the best of every race, of every nation. The strongest and the weakest, the most virtuous and the most vicious. Running away from the home of their crimes, others running to where they could practice the virtues, serve God in their own fashion, interpret the "word" according to their own lights. Hating one another, loving one another, agreeing and disagreeing in a hundred different languages, a hundred different dialects, a hundred different religions. Crowding one another, and fusing against their wills slowly with one another, without ever becoming a compact whole.

New York! A city requiring sixty thousand bushels of wheat to feed it one day. Several thousand head of cattle are hardly sufficient to feed it one meal. New York! Which requires forty thousand people to amuse its population in theaters where are seated over a million people nightly. The city toward which lead a thousand roads. The whole city one of steady wayfarers who spend their days in toil, and rushing from one place to another. New York, not a city but a world!—Konrad Bercovici, in Around the World in New York.

Not More Government But More Religion. Just as industry is discovering that production cannot be improved further without considering the character and welfare of employers and employees, so are we learning that the industrial community cannot be improved without taking into account the masses who

make up that community. It is an old saying that a river cannot rise higher than its source. Certainly no change in the mechanical form of government can solve the problems of our industrial communities. It may be the problem of our churches to devise a new mechanism through which the citizens may have a more active participation in the city's government, but primarily the character of the masses must be improved. This cannot be done in a wholesale way. The city can be reclaimed only as each neighborhood is reclaimed. Today the reclamation of the neighborhood depends largely upon the churches and schools. The writer uses the word "largely" because the home should be the real field for this missionary work. Unfortunately, the home has to a considerable extent ceased to function.

The problem is of such great importance that every denomination should give it most careful consideration. Every churchman should be most liberal toward the city missionary work of his own and also of other denominations. The problem of the industrial community is not the problem of any one church in that community, but rather the combined problem of all the churches of all denominations.

It is the prime virtue of the religion of Jesus that it brought forth, not a mechanism but a principle! We are not here, as church people, to fit to this modern world any machinery set up in Palestine two thousand years ago. If that were our task, we would have to confess the inadequacy of the Christian idea. But that is not our task. Jesus taught no such thing. He left the world with no labored plan of work, no cumbersome machinery. He left us rather a legacy of golden principles. These are to be found in his own words as they occur in the Gospels and, most of all, in the Sermon on the Mount. It is our task to re-read these sublime principles and to apply them to the conditions of today. What does it mean today to "Love your neighbor as yourself"? What does it mean to "Do unto others as you would like to have them do to you"? These are the questions that the Church must answer if it is to regain the moral leadership of the world.

Once more let us remember that the Church can do this if it desires to. No word is truer than is the declaration, in its applied sense, which Jesus made to his disciples: "All power have I given unto you." Under the vicissitudes of history, this has come to be actually true. For some mysterious reason the Church has come through victorious. Wealth, numbers, power, ability, machinery—all these are in its hands. It can do what it will. The time is ripe for the application of religion to the affairs of this day and generation. The call is laid upon the shoulders of the Church.—Roger W. Babson, in New Tasks for Old Churches.

The City and You. After all, every great city is a group of neighborhoods. One of these neighborhoods is where you live. Your neighborhood is not so much a geographical area as it is a social unit. Your neighborhood is that group of people whom you meet or who meet you every day—the janitor, the milkman, the newsboy, the conductor, the people who work with you in your office or shop, your school friends, the members of your family circle, and many others. Those are your neighbors in the terms of the parable of the Good Samaritan. These are the people to whom you can bring the gospel of love, brotherhood, unselfishness and goodwill. Every modern city needs great preachers, but it needs Christians of every rank and occupation. It may be that it was not Paul's preaching alone, but the personal work of all the members of that church in Corinth which brought the gospel to its full triumph in that difficult city-center.

For Bible Class Discussion. Is it better for a church to be institutionally sound or to be spiritually strong? Can a church be well organized and function well mechanically and at the same time be spiritually effective? Is your church more interested in motion than in motives? In works or in faith? What can you do to make it a church of faith and works?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is meant by "flesh" and by "spirit" as used by Paul in this letter? 2. Why should temperance instruction be given in church schools? 3. How are the young menaced today by dope sellers? 4. What progress in temperance reform has been made in other countries? 5. What is the situation in our country? 6. What duty has our church in regard to making our community temperate?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
WORKING FOR CHRIST IN A GREAT CITY

Beginning the Lesson. Paul was city-born and city-bred. Where was he born? Of what province was Tarsus the chief city? At Tarsus and at Jerusalem he received his education. In all his misisonary journeys we find that he preferred to labor in the great cities. This was undoubtedly due to his personal interest in cities and to his keen missionary wisdom which realized the expediency of winning the great centers of population. The cities offered him a threefold advantage—great numbers of people could be quickly reached; the cosmopolitan nature of the cities gave the gospel ready access to many different races; and there were to be found the leaders whose adherence to Christianity would mean much for its rapid spread throughout the empire.

Paul had not met with equal success in every city since his arrival in Europe. What do you know about his success at Philippi? At Thessalonica? At Berœa? Happy in the eager and thoughtful hearing given him by the noble-minded Berœans, Paul must have been greatly disturbed by the ineffectiveness of his visit to the next great city, Athens. In that great center of intellectual life his message was laughed at and derided by the Athenian philosophers, who were always ready to hear some new thing but whose intellectual pride hindered their learning the truth from a Jew.

In going from Athens to Corinth, Paul came to a very different atmosphere. Corinth was a commercial city, filled with luxury and bent upon the pursuit of pleasure.

The Church at Corinth. A writer (D. A. Hayes, in Paul and His Epistles) draws an imaginative picture of the congregation as it assembles, which he bases on information given in Paul's letters.

"Now that they are gathering, let us notice something of the strange assortment of their costumes and character. Here are some Jews who enter with their heads covered and sit with their heads covered through the whole service. Here are some Greeks who come in and who sit bareheaded. Here are some women who are veiled and some who are unveiled, some who cover their heads and some who uncover them. Here are some well-to-do people in the garments of the rich. Here are more in the rags of the poor. Here are some with the ring of the Roman freedman upon their fingers. Here are others who evidently are slaves. The clothes are not all clean. The faces are not all refined. Some bear the marks of prolonged dissipation. Some are defaced with the scars of former brawls, and some are cruel with the lines of inherited selfishness and extortion. Converted thieves and prostitutes and drunkards and extortioners some of them were, but only some. These transformed reprobates are numerous enough to make the church a marvel in its own eyes and in the eyes of others. The news of their conversion has been carried far and wide, and many people have been attracted to these Christian services, just to see and hear them. There are many others who always have lived moral and upright lives: Jews who have kept the whole law from their youth up; Syrians who have prided themselves on their purity of conversation and conduct; women whose whole nature revolts from uncleanness of any kind."

A church which Paul deemed worthy and competent enough to understand such great thoughts as he wrote to them in his two letters (read First Corinthians 13) must have been a church which he respected and loved in spite of its faults and foibles.

How Paul Was Encouraged at Corinth. Think of Paul's isolation. He went alone from Athens to Corinth, and he did not leave Athens with a glad heart, but with a sense of defeat. He crossed an arm of the sea and walked up the valley toward Corinth with a roll of parchment in his hand and a change of clothes hung over his shoulder. He was an inconspicuous figure to the ordinary passer-by. But any one who looked into the face of Paul would see that he was more than an ordinary man. He was traveling with a purpose. He reached the city. He found a home for himself with Aquila and Priscilla, with whom he worked at his trade of tentmaking.

He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and afterwards he went home to his room and reviewed what he had seen and felt and heard that day—what tears, what pains, what heart-aches! A lonely man was Paul. There is nothing more touching and winning about Paul than his great human heart.

When Silas and Timothy reached Corinth, Paul took on new energy and gave himself with new zeal to his work. We receive our inspiration from others. We make one another strong or weak by our friendship and coöperation, or the withholding of them. How Paul loved those who were loyal to him.

When courage and hope seemed to fail Paul there came to him a vision. He saw Christ and heard a voice, and the voice said exactly what he needed to have said to him. "Fear not, Paul; hold not thy peace; thy life is safe in my hands; keep your nerve steady and your face firm; I am with you; do not leave Corinth yet; there are people here that belong to me." In that midnight hour he gained a fresh consciousness of Jesus. That is what the story of the vision means. We do not know how it came, or the details of it, but we are sure that vision meant first and foremost that Paul had a fresh consciousness of the present working of Christ. Paul heard the words, "I am with you," in his soul; something bore that conviction in upon him that he was not alone, that Jesus the Lord was with him. That cured his loneliness.—Adapted from a Sermon by George E. Rees.

Working at his Trade. A young man came to visit the monk Marcarius and found him weaving a mat. "What!" exclaimed the youth, "so you work for food that perishes?" The monk did not answer him, but handed him a book and bade him read. Noon came, but instead of being invited as a guest to eat the young man was told that in the cloister the apostolic rule held good—"If any man will not work, neither let him eat."

This rule which the monk quoted was written by Paul from Corinth to the church at Thessalonica. What work was he himself doing at that time? The hand that wrote so many of the New Testament epistles was filled with goats' hair which he was weaving into coarse cloth for tents. Who were his companions in the work?

Paul gave the people of Corinth an example of industry and independence. All Jews, however rich their family might be, were taught a trade, and Paul's trade was that of tentmaking. As he had come to Corinth to bring the gospel, he might have allowed the people to support him as a preacher, but this he would not do. Here as elsewhere he worked at his trade and earned his own living.

The Jews were right in believing that every one should know how to do something well. Henry Ford believes that young people should be educated in school for useful citizenship, and that every boy should learn there some trade at which he could work on leaving, or could fall back upon in case he did not succeed in a profession. "When pupils come out of school people should want them," he declares. "They should be in demand, and not find themselves shifting aimlessly without a definite purpose in life. Now they say, 'I went through high school,' 'I went through college.' That does not mean anything. But if they say, 'I am a machinist, a cabinet-maker,' that does mean something."

Do you agree with Mr. Ford? He has the courage of his convictions and proposes to devote possibly $100,000,000 to building trade schools throughout the country, in which students will receive vocational training. They are to be taught a good basic education and all the arts as well as trades, even how to buy and sell, to be traders as well as mechanics. A newspaper comments upon his plan in these words:

"Technical education will not, of course, meet all the requirements of youth, nor will it solve all modern social and economic problems. Man does not live by tools alone any more than by bread alone. But neither can he live fully and freely and happily without work. And whatever fits people for work fits them for life. Whilst we maintain that the need for a liberal education is greater today than ever, we must also admit that the criminal classes of this continent are recruited from 'cultural drifters' as well as from the uneducated stratum of society. All success to the Motor King in his great experiment!"

Sentence Sermon. Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.—Roosevelt.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the meaning of verse 15? 2. What did Jesus say in Jn. 15.5, 8 about bearing fruit? 3. Commit to memory the list given as the fruit of the spirit. 4. What is the harm of drinking liquor?

LESSON V—NOVEMBER 1

WORLD'S TEMPERANCE SUNDAY

GOLDEN TEXT: Be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit. Ephesians 5.18

LESSON Galatians 5.13-26
Romans 13.1-14

DEVOTIONAL READING Romans 14.13-21

GALATIANS 5.13 For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only "use" not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another. 14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, "even" in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. 15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

16 But I say, Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would. 18 But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are "these": fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, 21 envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you even as I did forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 meekness, self-control; against such there is no law. 24 And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.

25 If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk. 26 Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. Christian Freedom, verses 13-15. "Brothers," wrote Paul to the Galatians, "you are free from the Law, but Christian liberty does not mean that you can do as you please."

> "A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to all" (Martin Luther).

Liberty and license are not synonymous. Do not use your freedom as a license for indulging your lower impulses, but live in accordance with the law of love. "Flesh" is used here for "that element of man's nature which is opposed to goodness and makes for evil. It signifies the entire potency of sin." "Through loving service for others," continued Paul, "you fulfil the whole divine law, which is, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Paul here quotes Lev. 19.18.

> "The freedom of the gospel consists in slavery to the law of love. The emergence from bondage through Christ is the passing into a sphere of life in which all power should act under the dominion of the true motive —love" (G. Campbell Morgan).

Then remembering that the Galatians were prone to quarrel, Paul adds, "But if ye bite and devour one another—act toward one another like dogs or wild beasts—beware lest you destroy one another." "Mutual backbiting and hatred can only end in the destruction of one another's spiritual life."

> Where two people quarrel, both are at fault. "How do you keep yourself from being involved in the quarrels?" a member of a contentious church was asked. "By letting the angry person have all the quarrel to himself," was the reply.

II. The Power of the Spirit, verses 16-18. Walk by the Spirit, submit to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all your acts, and then you will not fulfil the desire of your evil nature. For the evil nature and the indwelling Holy Spirit are antagonistic. "Throughout this passage the 'Spirit' is evidently the Divine Spirit, for the human spirit in itself and unaided does not stand in direct antagonism to the flesh" (Lightfoot). "When Paul speaks of 'the spirit,' does he

mean spirit in man, or does he mean the Holy Spirit of God? I am inclined to think that in a great many cases he means both. A little child is sulky and cross, and the mother takes the child up in her lap, and talks with it, and reasons with it. By and by, the pouting lips begin to be drawn into a pleasanter expression, and the child brushes the tears from its eyes, and the frown is smoothed from the brow, and the little child jumps down and runs away, playing. Whose spirit is in the child's—mother's or child's? Both. The mother's spirit is in the child's" (Lyman Abbott).

"The Spirit strives to hinder you from obeying your evil nature, and your evil nature strives to hinder you from obeying the Spirit, for they are at warfare one with the other, and prevent your doing what you would." Paul's theory seems to be as follows: Man's glory lies in his will. In him, however, are two hostile forces. The flesh seeks ascendancy, urging him to choose the things he likes. The Spirit urges him to unite himself with God and things divine, to use his will to govern his life according to spiritual motives.

"Paul was pretty much of a student of human nature. He knew with considerable accuracy how other people were likely to find matters going with them, because he knew how matters habitually went with him. This is a little bit of autobiography; that's why it's a little bit of universal experience. He says it without any hesitation at all, and it's a fact which any life or civilization that's advancing, as his life was advancing, must increasingly learn to handle.

"'Ye cannot do the things that ye would.' 'I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.' By all means let us be conscious of our limitations. It's the only hopeful thing about us—that our aims will outstrip our powers. Let us do more than that: let us accept our limitations. Have faith in God, and instead of stopping where you can't go on, begin there; for it's there and there only that God begins, when a man kneels" (Paul Scherer).

"If you are led by the Spirit," Paul continues, "you are not under the law, for you will not disobey it." "Law exists for the purpose of restraint, but in the works of the Spirit there is nothing to restrain" (Lightfoot).

"Standing on the sands o' Dee, I saw a huge wall of masonry between me and the railing. Innocent waves lapped peacefully upon the sands a mile or more from the wall. One might say, 'How silly to build such a wall!' The wall was not built for these waves but for the wild, unruly waves that rush and tear when the tide is in and the storm is on. So the law is not made for one for whom it is not needed. For the Christian his loyalty and love are enough" (Johnston).

"Law is not made for the righteous man, but for the lawless and unruly, for the ungodly, and sinners" (Paul).

III. The Works of the Flesh, verses 19-21. The works of the flesh are manifest—plainly seen—Paul declares, and then he gives a repelling list of some fifteen vices which were common among the Galatians. "It may be pointed to as a proof of depravity that vocabularies have more words descriptive of forms of sin than words descriptive of forms of holiness. Under the fruit of the Spirit Paul gives a list of nine, but under the works of the flesh his list extends to fifteen, properly sixteen, and the word translated 'which' implies that he did not profess to give an exhaustive list—he could easily have added other instances" (R. Finlayson).

"The horrid enumeration follows a natural order. The list begins with sins against self; then come what were more directly sins against God; finally, there are the sins against society" (A. W. Robinson). "The words fall into four groups. The first group includes three sins in which sensuality in the narrower sense is prominent; the second includes two that are associated with heathen religions; the third group contains eight in which the conflict with others is present; the fourth consists of drunkenness and its natural accompaniments."

"I forewarn you, tell you plainly, even as I did on my visits to you (Gal. 1.9; 4.13)," Paul adds, "that they who practice such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God."

"I read in the memoirs of a country vicar that he found the glebeland had been neglected for years, and the soil was so knotted with squitch and was so poisonous with noxious weeds that it took years to clear it and prepare it for the cultivation of anything that was worth cultivating. So it is, only much more so, with the man or woman who has allowed heart and mind to be overgrown with the rank weeds of self-indulgence. Those weeds are deeply rooted, and they need painful pulling and digging out, so painful that one needs almost superhuman strength to accomplish the operation" (H. Jeffs).

IV. The Fruit of the Spirit, verses 22-24. "When the baleful effects of the self-life is corrected, the fruits of the Spirit appear naturally and easily. Note the distinction between work, in which there is effort, and fruit, which swells so imperceptibly and silently on the branch, pressed out from within!" (F. B. Meyer). He who is governed by the inner Spirit is not content merely to refrain from breaking the law; he exercises positive virtues such as Paul now enumerates: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control. Each of these is the result of the first, which is love. Against such there is no law. "Paul is content to remark—not without a touch of irony in his tone—that these things do not seem to call for the interference of legislation!" (A. W. Robinson).

"This list, like the former, is threefold, corresponding to the same three great aspects of life, but with a significant change of order. Love, joy, peace, have reference to the life of a Christian in his intercourse with God; long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, describe the qualities which should characterize him in his bearing toward his fellow-men; then finally we have the description of the life in respect of self. The really free life of the Spirit will culminate in meekness, by which is meant a due estimation of the place which self ought to hold; and temperance (in its widest meaning of self-control), which is the vigorous determination to see to it that self is kept in its place" (A. W. Robinson).

Note that "self-control" takes the place in our Revised Version of "temperance" in the Authorized Version. This is because we have limited the word "temperance" to abstinence from strong drink, whereas it concerns the avoidance of many evils and has been well defined as "a practiced mastery of self," self-control. "Followers of Christ," Paul tells the Galatians, "crucify the flesh, put to a violent death their evil tendencies."

"Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control—these are the separate features that go to make up a good photograph of the Master. Go through the catalog, and interrogate yourself concerning every article in it. Love! Are you affectionate, loving, self-sacrificing? Joy! Are you bright and happy and sunny? Peace! Do you lead a quiet and peaceful life in all goodness and gravity? Long-suffering! Are you patient, in the shop, in the home, with those under your authority? Kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control! Do you possess these things? Wherever the Spirit of Christ is, there these things are" (J. D. Jones).

V. The Final Counsel, verses 25, 26. "If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk." Walking by the Spirit is the effect of living by the Spirit. If the Divine Spirit has control of our spirit, then we are living loftily, doing daily what we believe Christ would have us do.

"Walk is greater than talk, and it is much more easy to talk about our walk than walk our talk" (Dan Crawford).

"Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another."

"No man resolved to make the most of himself can spare the time for personal contention. Still less can he afford to take all the consequences, including the vitiation of his temper and the loss of his self-control" (Lincoln).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, verse 20. All these were evils especially prevalent in the cities of Asia Minor. So great was the rivalry and wrangling among the cities that the Emperor was called upon to settle rival claims for the honor of first place in a province.

Drunkenness, revelings, and such like, verse 21. The remains of the later Greek comedy, and the paintings on Greek vases, show how characteristic and universal such revels were in the Greek cities. Komos, revel, was made a god, and his rites were carried on quite systematically, and yet with all the ingenuity and inventiveness of the Greek mind, which lent perpetual novelty and variety to the revelings.—Wm. M. Ramsay.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The people to whom Paul wrote his letter lived in Galatia, the Roman province which extended from north to south across the central plateau of Asia Minor. In Southern Galatia were the cities where Paul founded churches on his second missionary journey—Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. He visited Galatia again on his third missionary journey. Then two or three years later he wrote this letter.

The letter falls naturally into three parts of two chapters each. In the first part, Paul indicates his commission and authority. In the second, he deals with his argument of justification by faith. In the third part, he exhorts the Galatian converts to avoid the dangers to which they were exposed and to fulfil their duties as Christians.

It looked to the Galatians as though Paul's teaching, that followers of Christ were not under the law, would lead to lawlessness. In the beginning of the fifth chapter Paul tells them that Christ sets them free from the bondage of the old law, and urges them to hold fast their freedom. Then in our lesson text he tells them not to err in thinking that freedom from the requirements of the law means disobedience to its spirit, which is that of love to others. "To men who have been accustomed to think of law as the only obstacle to free self-indulgence, or to those who have not been accustomed to high ethical standards, freedom from the law was easily taken to mean that for the Christian there is nothing to stand in the way of the unrestrained indulgence of his own impulses. Of this danger Paul is well aware (Rom. 6.1; Phil. 3.17; Col. 3.1), and beginning with this verse he addresses himself vigorously to meeting and arresting it."

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

The teaching of facts about temperance and prohibition is especially important in the cities, not merely because of their great future influence upon government, but also because many present large city influences naturally tend to prejudice youth against prohibition. Additional efforts must therefore be made in the church schools of the large cities to counteract these harmful city influences.

Another overwhelmingly important reason is the campaign of "wet" propaganda reaching everywhere in the United States today. It is not only mature readers but the growing boys and girls who are constantly influenced against prohibition. Cartoons and feature articles in the daily press influence even the very young minds. Magazine articles read by older girls and boys are a tremendous force tending toward the breakdown of confidence in the prohibition law. A certain popular magazine, with more than one million and a half circulation, according to its editorial management, deliberately caters to youth in the selection of stories and special articles. These stories and special articles as well as the editorials in this magazine are constantly used to arouse prejudices against the eighteenth amendment. Another magazine popular among young people also devotes a great deal of its attention to attacks against the "dry" law. Unless newspaper and magazine propaganda is overcome by the teaching of the fundamental facts favorable to prohibition in the church schools, many young men and young women will align themselves on the "wet" side in the future.

The most potent propaganda of the "wets" in its damage to the "dry" cause

is found in the moving-picture theaters. Children and young people attending the movies by millions every night constantly see scenes that make the drinking of intoxicants appear to be interesting, humorous, "sporty," and adventurous. In addition to the suggestions contained in the pictures themselves many subtitles—humor from the press—and other special film features very frequently contain attacks against prohibition. Even the radio is by no means free from "wet" propaganda. Noted speakers given time on the air to discuss other topics very frequently introduce remarks against prohibition that are unfair, to say the least. As in the case of the movie, radio has a mighty influence, particularly upon the minds of youth.

Total abstinence now is infinitely more important than ever in this age of high-speed machinery, airplanes, traffic congestion, and general interdependence of human action. If the liquor traffic now were advocated by no one, if intoxicants were merely an individual danger confronting men and women, it would be important to teach against their use. But with the liquor traffic openly and brazenly insisting upon its right to return to entrap, poison, and destroy, with the most gigantic propaganda organization in history aggressively active against the law, it is much more important that the church schools should be used in the fight to uphold prohibition and protect humanity against the liquor evil.

If America is to become a land free from intoxicating liquor for the sake of boys and girls of tomorrow, it will be necessary to teach the truth about alcohol to the boys and girls of today.—Condensed from an Article in The Church School Journal, by F. Scott McBride.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE PROGRESS OF TEMPERANCE REFORM

Beginning the Lesson. Charles Haddon Spurgeon has left on record an interesting account of a visit he made to the Library at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he saw a fine statue of Lord Byron. (Joseph Nelson Greene gives this story in The Portrait of a Prodigal.) All the world knows something of the tragically sad career into which Byron was hurled by sinful indulgence. He has well described his own condition in these words, written on his thirty-sixth birthday:

"My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!"

Mr. Spurgeon says the librarian instructed him to stand in a certain position and look upon the statue of Byron. He looked and said: "What a fine intellectual countenance! What a grand genius he was!" The librarian then led Spurgeon to a position on the other side and told him to look again. Then there seemed to be in the face of Byron such a scowl and dreadful leer as Milton would have painted into the face of Satan when he said, "Better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven." "Do you think the artist designed this?" Spurgeon asked. The librarian answered, "Yes, he wished to picture two characters—the great, the almost superhuman genius, and yet the enormous mass of sin that was in his soul."

Paul pictures two such results in his letter to the Galatians. (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

Slave or Free? "As long as your conscience needs a slave driver you are really a slave," said a wise old teacher. The wonderful thing about the Christian religion is just that it makes moral responsibility a joy instead of a task. Paul is very eager that the converts who have not thought much about these things shall see clearly that the freedom of the Christian is emancipation from evil desire, and not emancipation from the inhibitions of goodness. There is a type of man who thinks that he must do something which is bad in its nature in order to prove that he is free. Paul knew that the license of the wrongdoer is only a rearrangement of his chains. "Freedom is only a make-believe unless it has a heart of love." No man can have too much freedom if noble, unselfish love enters in his heart. Any freedom is too much if it is the slave of a hard and calculating selfishness. In words which fairly ring

with happy understanding, Paul declares that it is love which makes freedom a safe possession.—Lynn Harold Hough.

The Way of the Transgressor Is Hard. Sin of any kind speaks defeat and extinction. Trace its progress in your own heart—the lust for pleasure or gold or honor—and mark how it has ruined all that was best in you. Watch how those who openly or secretly defy the great laws written in every human heart, have often to hide their heads in poverty or loneliness or shame. See how the nations which have given themselves over to the lusts of the flesh have gone down before the inexorable laws which they defied. Before our eyes there are nations dying of their "centuries of folly, noise and sin." And shall we be found to fight against God? Surely the way of transgressors is hard; for all the laws of God's world are against them. To connect ourselves consciously with evil is to evoke a Nemesis whose stroke, be it swift or slow, nothing but the all-pitiful grace of God can stay.—John Edgar McFayden.

Temperance a Foe to Poverty. See the article by Samuel Crowther in The Ladies' Home Journal for January and February, 1930.

Children Benefit by Prohibition. See the 1929 annual report of Theodore A. Lothrop, General Secretary of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

Something to Get Excited About. In all the United States prison inmates convicted for violations of the Federal Narcotic Laws make up thirty-four per cent of the population, while those convicted of all sorts of breaches of the prohibition law only make up fourteen per cent of the population. In a check-up in the Federal penitentiary at McNeil's Island held recently it was discovered that fifty-six prisoners were bootleggers and 896 were drug peddlers. The capture of the books of one dope ring in Chicago showed 18,000 drug addicts among the customers, involving yearly payments of $39,000,000. It is estimated that 75,000 girls from all walks of life disappeared from the homes of the United States last year, and the great majority of them went by way of the drug habit. These figures are all for the United States, but many other parts of the world are no better. The League of Nations has reckoned that only 336 tons of opium are needed for all the possible medical needs of the world, but 8,600 tons are actually used every year.

And the story of what this consumption does in the inducement to crime, the breaking down of morals and decency, and the break-up of health, shows that this thing is a monster in something more than in size. The incalculable suffering in mind and body of those who have tied themselves to this living death is something one cannot think of without a shudder. And the stories that are told of the efforts at reclamation of addicts in institutions, with everything that science can do to help, gives one a terrible idea of the diabolical hold the drug habit can have on a man's very soul.

Mayor Walker, of New York, says, "The dope problem is the biggest one this city has to solve, and so far as I have been able to ascertain from reports from other big cities, the biggest one in those communities, too." The whole devilish business of training boys and girls to be dope fiends is something to get excited about.—The New Outlook.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. Should not every Christian be able to say, "If every one followed my example, there could not possibly be any drink evil"?

2. Up-to-date temperance information. Ask the members of the class to bring to class for discussion clippings from newspapers and magazines giving the latest temperance news.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up and Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How did the city of Ephesus differ from Corinth in culture? 2. Who persecuted Paul at Philippi because Paul had been the means of pecuniary loss to him, and with what incident at Ephesus is this comparable? 3. What does Paul say about his experiences at Ephesus in Acts 20.18, 19; 1 Cor. 15.32; 16.9; 2 Cor. 1.8? 4. How do you regard the special miracles of verse 12? 5. What is the difference between the belief in "malicious animal magnetism" in which some Christian Scientists believe (notably Mrs. Eddy, in the earlier part of her career) and the

belief in demon possession? 6. How prevalent are superstitions today among otherwise intelligent people?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

REASONS FOR TOTAL ABSTINENCE

Beginning the Lesson. The One Volume Commentary has this excellent paraphrase of our text from the Epistle to the Galatians:—

Cling, then, to your freedom from legal rules and customs; but remember that freedom means not license, but loving service. For love is the essence of God's love, whereas mutual backbiting and hatred can only end in the destruction of one another's spiritual life.

In the life which is fostered by the Spirit you will find your true safety against the evils of which I am warning you. For between the pure aspirations of the Spirit and the sinful impulses of the flesh there is a sharp, irrepressible conflict. If you live under the influence of the Spirit of God, you have no need to seek the guidance of law. Contrast the sins which spring from the carnal impulses with the virtues which spring from the Spirit's guidance. The former exclude from God's Kingdom; the Christian must abjure them; but the latter are not condemned by any law.

If, then, we possess the Spirit in our hearts, let our outward action be under his guidance.

Create in me a Clean Heart, O God. Down in some dark corner of the heart, there may be the old grudge against some one whom we may imagine to have done us a wrong. Perhaps we do not think of it very much, but there it is, full of dangerous possibilities, like old waste soaked with oil; and it may be some day that a single word which angers us, or a little slight which may not have been intended, falls on that ugly grudge like a match, and it flames up into some explosion of temper which we are bitterly ashamed of afterwards. Or in a corner of the mind may be the impure memory, or the unclean imagination which we have not set ourselves to clear away; and one day the flame of some temptation falls upon it, and the fire of some evil recklessness leaps up and scars us in a way which it is hard ever again to hide. The only safe thing is to take care before the fire comes that there is nothing in us to start, and to spread, the blaze.—W. Russell Bowie, in The Armor of Youth.

Reasons for Self-Control. Self-control is the first and most important business of every one of us. What is it we have to control? Sir Wilfred Grenfell has written a book based on the teaching he gave his own two boys about the human machine. He wants every one to know the laws for the right control of every part. He knows that, like all other machines, the body can be a dangerous master. He wants appetite and every bodily habit to be brought under control of the thoughtful mind. He wants a boy to use his will —(which is the "control" part of the machinery)—to decide how he shall eat, drink, exercise, sleep, and the rest. He wants a boy to choose to make his body fit to carry out the highest and best of plans.

When we read the life of Dr. Grenfell, he helps us to understand how a strong body can be used to do the work of Christ in the world. Self-control: that is why he never allows sleep or slacking to rob him of the morning swim, or daily exercise: that is why he never indulges in rich food to clog the machinery and never takes a drop of alcohol. He knows that the very first thing alcohol does is to dull the highest part of the mind of man. He would never allow an engineer on one of his ships who took strong drink, for he knows that only the man who has perfect control of himself is fit to have charge of a ship's engines along a dangerous coast. He would never allow a doctor who drank alcohol to perform an operation on one of his patients. He says he could never listen to a preacher who drank alcohol.

And all this Grenfell does, and myriads of Christ's men the wide world over, because they have learned that the real secret of self-control is for Christ to be Master of the machine.

When Paul saw the light on the Damascus road he found the Master of his life. Henceforth, it was his one aim to put all the splendid machinery of his mind and will at the service of that Master. In his letters to those he had won for Christ he tells them again and again the secrets of his overcoming.

He loved to go back to the scenes of his boyhood when he had watched the wrestlers and the racers in the Stadium at Tarsus. He knew that the winner was the man who all through the year had kept himself "in form" by self-control. He knew that self-indulgence was the great enemy of the runner, and that he who has not learned to say "No" to the body will never wear the victor's crown. So, he says—"I keep my body under." It shall be servant, under control, not master, of his life.

On this Temperance Sunday, when, all over the world, boys and girls and young people are promising to take no drop of alcohol, but to keep their bodies under control for Christ, shall we also resolve to eat or drink nothing that will spoil the machine trusted to our care?—Emily Huntley, in The New Chronicle.

The Man who Had his Fling.

I have thrown the throttle open and am tearing down God's track;
I have thrown it out to full-speed and no hand can hold me back!
'Tis my arm controls the engine, though Another owns the rail,
But for once I'm in the open and the yardlights pass and pale!

Green lights! Red lights! God has hung his signals out!
Caution here! Danger ho! And what's the man about?
'Tis true he owns the Engine, to do as he has done,
But how about the Final Word—when he ends the Run?

So from siding on to junction point now I shall have my day;
I have stopped to read no orders, but I take the right-of-way,
Down the open grade I thunder and around the curve I swing,
For my hand is on the throttle and my heart shall have its fling!

Light lost! Life lost! Flag, O flag the others back!
Switch the wreck! Ditch the wreck! Dare any block God's track?
There creeps into the Terminal the man who had his day,
But I wonder, O my soul, just what his God will say!—Arthur Stringer.

For the Sake of Others. For a time I lived near a low-lying country district where the fields were separated by deep and dirty ditches over which rough and sometimes frail bridges of a single plank were cast for foot travelers. I have known men of weight to break those bridges in the middle and be dropped into the mud below. The planks would have stood some people's weight, but not theirs; and if a man of light weight argued that because he could safely cross, every other man should be able to cross also, he would be talking nonsense.

The bridge of moderate drinking will crash under the men and women handicapped by hereditary cravings, by certain conditions of nervous constitution, by strongly sensual natures, by feebleness of will, and many other things. And these are the weaker brethren whom, by what one has called "the logic of sympathy," we are as Christ's followers bound to consider and protect. Our moderation must never be their stumbling block. Remembering their weight of difficulties, we are to bear their burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ.—Ernest J. Padfield.

Sentence Sermons.

Cherish your body, for God made it great;
It has a guest of might and high estate;
Keep the shrine noble, handsome, high and whole,
For in it lives God's work, a kingly soul.—James Bartlett Wiggin.

The boy who cannot kill off a bad habit must live with it till it kills him.—The Youth's Companion.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where did Paul go between Corinth and his going to Ephesus to stay? 2. Where was Ephesus? 3. In what other places has Paul spoken first to the Jews in their synagogues and was then forced to withdraw? 4. In what lesson did we hear of those of "the way," and what does the term mean? 5. With what sorcerer had Paul come in contact in Cyprus? 6. Why did the magicians burn their books? 7. Do you know any one who believes in magic? 8. Do you practice any superstitious acts, such as thinking Friday an unlucky day, not wishing to sit thirteen at a table, knocking on wood, etc.? 9. Why is it not right for a Christian to be superstitious?

LESSON VI—NOVEMBER 8

PAUL IN EPHESUS

GOLDEN TEXT: Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them. Ephesians 5.11

LESSON Acts 19; Ephesians 5.5-11 DEVOTIONAL READING 2 Corinthians 1.3-11

ACTS 19.8 And he entered into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading "as to" the things concerning the kingdom of God. 9 But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. 10 And this continued for the space of two years; so that all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. 11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: 12 insomuch that unto the sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out. 13 But certain also of the strolling Jews, exorcists, took upon them to name over them that had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. 14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, a chief priest, who did this. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said unto them, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? 16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and mastered both of them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 And this became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, that dwelt at Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. 18 Many also of them that had believed came, confessing, and declaring their deeds. 19 And not a few of them that practised magical arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Forfeited Chance, verses 8, 9. On his third missionary journey (see The Historical Background), Paul came to Ephesus, where he followed his customary method of speaking first to the Jews in the synagogue. For three months he preached there, but instead of heeding his message the Jews hardened their hearts, and some of them even spoke evil of "The Way" (used as a synonym for Christianity: recall Acts 9.2). Paul and the Christian part of the congregation, both Jews and Gentiles, were compelled to withdraw to the lecture-room of Tyrannus. Tyrannus was probably a Gentile who had a school of philosophy, and Paul may have seemed to the Ephesians to be only one of the wandering professors of philosophy who were so numerous at Ephesus.

One important manuscript and certain other authorities add that Paul taught "from the fifth hour to the tenth." If this is an authentic detail, we have an interesting side-light on Paul's habits of life and work. Ramsay points out that Paul taught "after business hours." Beginning work before sunrise, as was the custom in all Ionian cities, Paul labored at his trade until the fifth hour, one hour before noon. The lecture room would not be in use after that hour, and instead of resting Paul taught for five hours following.

II. Two Fruitful Years, verse 10. For two years Paul continued to teach in the school of Tyrannus, and "all that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks." Within easy reach of Ephesus were the other cities of the Province of Asia, on the western shore of Asia Minor, and during these years all the Seven Churches of Asia mentioned in Revelation 1.4, 11 were probably founded. Visitors to the city on their return carried news of the great preacher to every out-of-the-way corner of the province.

III. Special Miracles Wrought by Paul, verses 11, 12. God was the power, Paul the instrument. Ephesus was the center of magical arts and provided a ready atmosphere for manifestations such as are recorded in verse 12. "The handkerchief was the 'sudaria' used to wipe the sweat from the workman's face, and the apron was the 'semicircula,' or workman's short apron" (Bart-

lett). Belief in such power was general. Superstition abounded. The spirit of expectancy was abroad. "Even though these men employed means to display their faith, which were unnecessary and superstitious," says the Cambridge Bible, "because of the reality of this faith, God did not suffer it to lose its reward."

Many of the practices and beliefs of some modern Christians are not less superstitious, unspiritual and unnecessary for God's blessing than was the procedure of these early Ephesian converts who believed that articles having touched Paul's body possessed a healing value for their friends who were sick in body and in mind.

When Christians approach the Lord's Table feeling that physical participation, by itself, in the communion service has magic values; when children are presented for baptism in the belief that the sacrament has meaning all apart from the spirit and purpose of the parents; or when the Bible is read, just read, with the expectation that its mere reading will work some blessing in the life, are these acts on higher plane than that of these converts in Ephesus who believed in magic, charms and incantations?

IV. Jewish Exorcists, verses 13-17. There were strolling Jews in Ephesus who traveled from place to place making their living as magicians and exorcists, professing to be able by the use of incantations and ceremonies to expel evil spirits and deliver men from their malign influence. These Jews began to employ the name of Jesus and Paul in their incantations, saying, "I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth."

In Jeremiah's day it was necessary for him to challenge openly false prophets who exercised great influence. "Then the Lord said unto me, the prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither speak I unto them."

Similarly in the Book of Acts (19.14, 15) there is the record of the seven sons of Sceva who used the name of Jesus as a magical incantation to expel spirits. We have to recognize that then, as now, merely psychic power might be confounded at times with spiritual power, and produce an inflation of spiritual confidence, strangely devoid of moral quality. And we flinch from the fact if we assert that the results of such activity are always either fleeting or pretended. To go no further than the realm of evangelism, there are undoubted instances of genuine conversion at the hands of men of worthless character who rendered only lip-service to the gospel.—R. C. Gillie.

The evil spirit challenged the right of these sons of Sceva to use these names—crying, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" And then the man who was possessed of the demon leaped upon two of the exorcists and overpowered them, so that they were forced to flee naked and wounded.

What would happen if we were challenged for every insincere, unreal word we used? Are some of our prayers mere forms uttered in the expectation that saying the words, "This we ask, in Jesus' name" may do something for us?

Paul's struggle with and victory over the demon-possessed became known with the result that fear fell upon all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. "The city became convinced that the name of Jesus must not be lightly used or trifled with, and so they magnified it."

V. A Notable Bonfire, verses 18-20. "This notorious case aroused the dormant consciences of certain of Paul's converts who had been and still were involved in the practice of magic." They saw the folly and danger of accepting Christianity without giving up the practice of magical arts, and they came and confessed, acknowledging their deeds—their practice of witchcraft, sorcery and exorcism—which were inconsistent with true Christian living.

"Candor compels us to admit that in America there is still much paganism. Up and down the western coast one can find the temples of alien religions, mostly of the Orient, where strange ritualistic cults challenge the sway of Christianity. Since the war there has been a great

growth of Spiritualism. Even if one admits that some very intelligent and educated people hold to Spiritualism in a tentative way and in the scientific spirit of investigation, one must confess that the popular practice of mediums is but a recrudescence of some of the most ancient superstitions of the race" (The Christian Century).

Not a few of them brought their books and burned them in the sight of all. "These were books of formulas for compelling the assistance of spiritual beings, or securing the affections of a beloved, or for inflicting pain and spiritual torment" (A. S. Peake). Probably there were few copies of the magicians' scrolls, and to their rarity was due their valuation at fifty thousand pieces of silver. If "pieces of silver" were denarii, then they were valued at fifty thousand days of labor.

Burning one's bridges has a place in all moral and spiritual advance. A definite break with the past helps one to move more steadily forward to the new objective. The book-burning at Ephesus, like the later "Burning of the Vanities" at Florence because of Savonarola's preaching, reduced the danger of a relapse. "Do you find yourself sometimes unwilling to cut off all possibility of ever indulging again in some questionable practice? You will never have peace and power until you cease to provide for the possibility of future indulgence."

So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed: thus Luke sums up the result of Paul's ministry at Ephesus.

VI. The Departure from Ephesus, verses 21-41. Read the account in The Acts of the uproar in the temple of Diana which made necessary Paul's departure from the city.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Strolling Jews, exorcists, verse 13. Such men claimed that they held communion with the spirit world, and that by some act or the use of some word they could obtain the help of superior spirits to do their will. "Solomon left behind him the manner of using exorcisms by which demons are driven away so that they never return, and this manner of cure is of great force unto this day," wrote Josephus. This is the way that a certain Eleazar "released people," according to one credulous writer. "He put a ring that had a root of one of those sorts mentioned by Solomon to the nostrils of the demoniac, after which he drew out the demon through his nostrils; and when the man fell down, immediately he adjured the demon to return into the man no more, making still mention of Solomon, and reciting the incantation that he had composed."

There were certain magical formulæ used at Ephesus known as the "Ephesian letters." "When pronounced," Conybeare and Howson say, "they were regarded as a charm, and were directed to be used, especially by those who were in power of evil spirits. When written, they were carried about as amulets." The sons of Sceva apparently thought that Paul used the name of Jesus as a sort of charm, and they attempted to use it in this way.

Not a few of them that practiced magical arts, verse 19. Recent discoveries have revealed the immense popularity of magic under the Roman Empire. The papyri discovered in Egypt are filled with mystic formulæ.—Foakes-Jackson.

In traveling through Palestine, one notices the superstition that reigns in the life of the Hebrew as well as of the Gentile. Be a man ever so versed in religious matters, he still resorts to the belief in necromancy, and in matters of import advises with fortune-tellers, clairvoyants, and wizards. The Mohammedans use their string of beads, or rosary, something after the childish inquiry made in civilization with the daisy by pulling out the petals, commencing with "He loves me, he loves me not"; so they commence "Successful, not successful," and the last bead tells them what they desire to know. There are many men and women in Palestine who have made themselves rich by this nefarious business of telling fortunes.

At the door of mosques, or even churches and synagogues, we see men and sometimes old women who have passed threescore years and ten, seated on a

little rug or mat, in front of them a tray covered with sand about half an inch deep, in which they draw squares and write cabalistic letters, by which they pretend to tell past and present events, and to discover lost articles. They have perfect liberty in plying their trade, and are never given up as false pretenders to the government, for, as a rule, these people profess to be highly religious, and when they have no customer one notices their lips moving continually, their heads shaking and nodding as if in devotion and prayer.

A child in a Hebrew family in Palestine wears sewed on his cap, or hanging around his neck, a little silver or copper locket enclosing a slip of parchment or paper written in cabalistic letters, insuring him against accidents of all kinds. Grown men and women carry around on their bodies, usually hanging from the neck, little pieces of alum engraved with letters, or shreds of cloth procured from some shrine, believing in the efficacy of their saving power.—Gamahliel Ward-el-Ward, in Palestine Through the Eyes of a Native.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Corinth seems to be the outstanding city from which Paul departed in peace and quiet. It was the limit of his Second Missionary Journey; from there he set his face toward Jerusalem and Antioch of Syria. With Aquila and Priscilla he set sail from the harbor of Cenchreæ and crossed the Ægean Sea to Ephesus. There he left his two companions, but did not yield to the entreaties of the Jews in whose synagogue he preached that he himself tarry longer, for he was desirous of spending the coming Passover with the Christian community at Jerusalem. Promising to come again if God so willed, he sailed to Cæsarea, and then journeyed on to Jerusalem. Here he celebrated the Passover, reported the results of his missionary labors and returned, by way of Cæsarea, no doubt, to Antioch in Syria, which he had left four years earlier on his Second Missionary Journey.

Paul spent some time in Antioch of Syria, and started forth again. He went

by way of Tarsus and the Cilician Gates to the churches which he had founded in the provinces of Galatia and Phrygia—Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia, and "established all the disciples." He continued on to Ephesus, and there he remained from 54 to 57 A.D., a longer time than he spent in any other city where he founded a church. It was during this time that he wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthians.

Ephesus, the capital of the Roman province of Asia (in Asia Minor), ranked with Antioch and Alexandria as the greatest cities of the Eastern Mediterranean. It had a fine harbor at the mouth of the Cayster, whose channel was then kept navigable for the largest sea-going vessels of the time, and it carried on a great commerce. The wares of China, India and Persia were brought there by caravan, then shipped to Greece and Rome. The harbor now is a mere marsh. The magnificent temple of Diana at Ephesus was reckoned one of the seven wonders of the world.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE GOSPEL FACING ERROR

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with The Historical Background and Explanations and Comments.

Paul and the Sick People. Sick people were cured by mere contact with handkerchiefs or aprons which had touched Paul's body, we are told. As a commentator observes, "Luke does not stop to discuss the religious value of this. He is simply recording facts. There is no doubt that in particular conditions of mental climate sudden cures of disease and derangement of mind are much easier than under other circumstances. The mood and attitude of people among whom exorcists and magicians made a profitable living, presented a favorable opportunity for the healing and calming power which God himself gave." "The whole subject bristles with difficulties," writes another commentator, "since we do not even know how far Paul countenanced the particular cases here mentioned. That Paul was conscious of being on occasions the medium of superhuman energies we know from his own unimpeachable witness (Rom. 15.18; 2 Cor. 12.12). But Paul himself would surely have discouraged such unethical and magical methods, so alien to faith as he understood its saving virtue. But, without his knowledge, the zeal of converts and others conveyed to the sick in body and mind objects which, having been in contact with his person, had, relative to the crude but intense faith and expectancy of the recipients, a healing value. What exactly Paul thought in the matter we do not know."

The Gospel Facing Error in Eastern Lands. Imperfect, distorted, well beyond all words to express it, may be the Mohammedan representation of our God in his Allah, of our Christ in his Isa. Yet these represent his honest, his earnest attempt, and the Christian cannot but begin on that understanding, and then try to show his friend picture after picture, lovely and glorious, of the true portrait. The mental image formed by Apollos of the Christ he preached at Ephesus may have seemed to Aquila and Priscilla extraordinarily unlike the adored Jesus, whom they now knew; hopelessly deficient and at points inaccurate and misleading; yet their dealing with him is summed up in that gentle remark, "They took him and expounded unto him the way of God more carefully," and so, while the Figure before Apollos' eyes did not move, the mists that concealed and distorted It disappeared, and Its divine glory shone full out.—W. H. T. Gairdner, in the International Review of Missions.

Curing Evil Spirits in China Today. In China there is today a widespread belief in demon-possession. Dr. Mary Stone, the wonderful Chinese doctor in Kiu Kiang, believed in it. In her explanation of the way she cured this affliction we can all believe. The whole atmosphere of the mission is peaceful and calm and full of intense Christian faith. The doctor, the nurses, the Bible women, all are zealous Christians, and when the poor, tormented soul comes to them for relief, prayer is offered in her behalf and she herself is taught to pray, and thus she finds what she seeks, calmness and sanity and Christ.

Magic and Superstition Today. We think scornfully of the magicians of ancient Ephesus and their dupes, but we ourselves are living in an era of credulity when any one who claims to practice the occult can get a hearing. Every big city has its hundreds of palmists, phrenologists, graphologists, astrologists, clairvoyants, crystal gazers, soothsayers, and so on, who have numbers of waiting clients before their inner shrines. The amazing thing is that among the clients are often found members of our Christian churches.

As Dr. Charles E. Jefferson tells us: "It was by a sure instinct that the church of New Testament times set its face as a flint against the magic of that day. And the good sense of civilized man all the world over attests the feeling which the apostles and the early Christians manifested against philandering with 'occult' things. Experience has shown with sufficient frequence and sufficient clearness that character deteriorates under such experiments; that spirituality suffers; that God becomes more and more remote, more impersonal, less, in a word, God; and the practices of 'magic' are precisely those which charlatanry, quackery, and imposture love best, through which they are able to dominate and swindle at will."

In the city of Reading, Pa., a very few years ago persons went to court and charged their neighbors with being witches. Children fell sick and their parents rushed for a "witch doctor," who told them some one had "verhexed" the children. The treatment consisted in chanting mystic words while passing a red cotton cord over the body. The Christian Advocate comments that "the treatment of the sick children is not very far from that of Christian Science, which talks of 'malicious animal magnetism,' etc., and treats patients exclusively by ideas. These Reading women deal in 'malicious animal magnetism,' too, only they use other words."

It is not the uncivilized of other lands and the ignorant, uneducated people of our own land alone who are superstitious today. A few years ago a man who believed that "we are all of us—or almost all of us—more or less superstitious," questioned a big group of normal school pupils and found that forty-five per cent of them acknowledged some superstitious belief. What is still more surprising, in a group of professors and their assistants at Harvard University, seventy-three per cent confessed that in their daily life they had little habits and customs indicating that, whether consciously or unconsciously, they were under superstitious influence.

Any one who habitually refrains from starting on a journey on Friday, who will not be one of thirteen to sit down at a table, who invariably picks up a pin, or knocks on wood, etc., etc., thereby testifies to some degree of faith in the efficacy of these practices, to some lurking desire to "be on the safe side, and take no chances." Is not such a person if a Christian as reprehensible as an untutored African with his fetish, or a cultured pagan Ephesian of Paul's day with his "Ephesian letters"?

Superstition in the Congo. One night, as I lay awake, I heard a drum ringing out from the direction of the settlement of the Ngombes. After awhile the beating ceased. A short interval and then some one beat out a return signal. I surmised that some news was being conveyed, since this is their method of "wiring." The next morning I asked the reason, and learned this: About a fortnight previously a death had taken place in a Ngombe village, a death attributed to witchcraft. Suspicion fastened upon a woman. The poor creature, knowing the cruel fate awaiting her, fled to the forest and remained in hiding ten days. Before I heard the signaling she had been captured. That was the news given, with this in addition that she was forthwith put to death.

This is one example of untold numbers whose lives are sacrificed at the altar of these fearful superstitions—superstitions believed in as firmly by those people as the gospel is by us. God alone knows the number of those who fall victims to these cruelties, and the number will go on increasing until we replace superstition by the faith of Jesus Christ, and teach men a respect for life based on the estimate of God.—W. R. Welch, a Missionary on the Upper Congo.

Christianity in Conflict with Vested Interests. At Philippi it was the masters of the maid having a spirit of divination who stirred up trouble for Paul. It was when they saw the hope of their gain was gone that they accused Paul and Silas before the magistrates of setting forth customs not lawful for Romans, and, thus concealing their self-interest under the cloak of patriotic zeal, they aroused the multitude to join them in their opposition to the apostles. Similar in its motive was the opposition at Ephesus. It was the trades which flourished there, the manufacturing and sale of images and shrines which were endangered by Paul's preaching against idolatry. If the people continued to turn away from the worship of Diana to the worship of God, there would soon

be no sale for these images. The worship of Diana is endangered by "this Paul" was the cry, but that their trade was endangered was the real motive of those who stirred up the riot. Luke gives us a vivid picture of the wild scene: Demetrius raising in other men interested in the same trade great excitement over the danger threatening their business, curious hangers-on joining with them in their shout of "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" till the crowd becomes too great for the street and with one accord they swarm into the theater, seizing on their way two of Paul's companions and dragging them with them, the greater part of the mob not knowing why nor wherefore they are met in that forum, and then for two long hours all shouting and howling till exhausted! The rulers of the games, who were Paul's friends, sent word to him not to risk his life by coming to the rescue of his two friends. Paul escaped with his life, indeed, but he was obliged to leave the city greatly dejected, "weighted down exceedingly," he wrote the Corinthians, "because of our affliction which befell us in Asia."

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. Exorcism and modern psychiatry.

2. What practices or ways of thinking that are pagan or unchristian are prevalent among Christians today?

3. Religion has to steer between a superstitiousness that sees the magically supernatural everywhere, and a materialistic realism that sees God nowhere. —Henry Churchill King.

4. Bad books of today that should be burned.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read chapters 20, 21 and 22. 2. What were Paul's reasons for wishing to go to Jerusalem? 3. How did his friends along the way seek to dissuade him from going there? 4. Was James wise in the request he made of Paul? 5. Was Paul wise in yielding? 6. What did it involve? 7. How did Paul address the mob, and what was the outcome?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

A BONFIRE OF BAD BOOKS

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with Explanations and Comments.

The Ephesian Magicians Proved the Sincerity of their Repentance. A young lad had been forbidden to swim in the river because of its dangerous pools. He came home, one day, however, with unmistakable signs of having disobeyed. His excuse was that he was "tempted so badly." "How did it happen that you had your bathing suit with you?" his mother questioned. "Well, Mother," said the boy, "I took my bathing suit along with me because I thought that perhaps I might be tempted."

Evidently the magicians of Ephesus feared that they might be tempted to make use of their magical formulæ, and instead of taking them along with them in case they were, they destroyed them. They made a costly sacrifice when they burned their "books"; perhaps twenty thousand dollars, estimating the value in the purchasing power of our money, went up in smoke. Each owner not only gave up a fortune, but in putting out of his way the temptation to continue his trade, he gave up his means of making a living. Why this waste? Why were not the books given to those who had no scruples about making use of them? Why were they not preserved as valuable curiosities for future ages?

The magicians would not only put temptation to do evil out of their own way, but out of the way of others as well. If it was wrong for them to use such books, it was wrong for others. If a publisher of evil literature should decide to give up his business because he had become a Christian, would you think him very sincere if he sold out his stock and his interests to another publisher who would not scruple to continue the work? The Ephesian magicians proved the sincerity of their repentance.

At the close of a lesson upon the burning of the sorcerers' books at Ephesus, the pastor of the Perces Indians said to his audience: "You know that was just like us at the camp-meeting over the river when the gospel came to us. We brought out our Wy-ya-kins and burnt them." All those men and women, as

Kate C. McBeth explains, had an attending spirit of some bird or animal, "and what a pile of feathers it was!"

Jim's Way. One who has led an evil life and then has become a true Christian will alter his purposes and habits and will put away from him all temptations to former evil practices. A baggageman named Jim knew how to put one sort of temptation out of his way. He owned a number of game roosters, and one morning he cut off all their heads. When he told his wife what he had done, she said they were too old to cook, and she could not see why he had done so foolish a thing. "I don't care," said Jim. "I haven't any use for them any longer. I used to take a couple of them out in a lot where people would see them Sunday mornings on their way to church and then I would fight them for all they were worth. I'm none too strong anyway, and so I thought that if I killed the roosters no fellow could come along some Sunday morning and say, 'Come, Jim, put a couple of them in a bag, and let's go and fight them.' If they're dead, I can't go, can I?"

Bonfires Needed Today. What a blessing it would be if bonfires could be made of evil books and periodicals of our day! Reports from reformatories trace the crime among boys and girls to the influence of bad books and bad movies, and to the reading of the details of crime published in our sensational daily newspapers. When an office boy asserted that a man wearing a huge sombrero had come in while his employer was away and pointing a revolver at his head had made him keep still while he took a large sum of money from the drawer and then departed, the story sounded so false that the boy was arrested. Before the court he struck a tragic attitude and in a boastful manner pleaded guilty. In his possession were found three books which told the tale of what he had been feeding upon.

"Do you know," cried Ruskin, "that if you read 'this' you cannot read 'that'?" If you read good books you will not be tempted to read evil ones. A boy who later became governor of the state of Minnesota, Governor John Johnson, was the son of a village drunkard, and as a lad had apparently little chance to make anything of himself. He secured a job at washing bottles and tending the soda fountain in a drug store where a customer found him reading a trashy book. Instead of condemning the book the man told him that if he would agree to read The Conquest of Mexico, the Conquest of Peru, and Ivanhoe, he would give him a subscription to the local library. John agreed. When those books had been read he had no further desire to read trashy ones. At odd moments he read worth-while books, and educated himself so well that, with little schooling and no college training, he was thought by his fellow citizens worthy of occupying the governor's chair.

"If kings and queens were waiting to talk with us, if noblemen and princes were holding audience till we should come, how long would we stop to barter gossip with the corner loafers?" questions a prominent writer. "And yet we do just that when we read cheap and temporary trash of superficial minds while all the while the great books of the spirit are waiting for us."

A librarian asserts that on the whole boys read better books than girls. Boys, she says, read more instructive books, more history and historical stories, more travel books, more books on how to make things, more books that give them general knowledge of all things, while girls prefer novels. If they are good novels they may be pernicious for the reason which Ruskin gives: "The best romance becomes dangerous if by its excitement it renders the ordinary course of life uninteresting, and increases the morbid thirst for acquaintance with scenes in which we shall never be called to act." And if the novel is vulgar or worse, incalculable is the harm it works.

Sentence Sermons. Superstition is the religion of feeble minds.—Edmund Burke.

To be fettered by any form of superstition is wrong for a Christian.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Trace on the map Paul's course from Corinth to Jerusalem. 2. What happened at Miletus? 3. At Tyre? 4. At Cæsarea? 5. How did Paul show great courage? 6. Where before this has Paul encountered a mob and with what result? 7. Where has he been bound with chains? 8. When had another mob in Jerusalem cried, "Away with him"? (Lk. 23.13-25.)

LESSON VII—NOVEMBER 15

PAUL IN JERUSALEM

GOLDEN TEXT: Thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. Acts 22.15

LESSON Acts 21.17 to 23.30 DEVOTIONAL READING 2 Corinthians 4.7-15

ACTS 21.27 And when the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the multitude and laid hands on him, 28 crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place; and moreover he brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath defiled this holy place. 29 For they had before seen with him in the city Trophimus the Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple. 30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together; and they laid hold on Paul, and dragged him out of the temple: and straightway the doors were shut. 31 And as they were seeking to kill him, tidings came up to the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in confusion. 32 And forthwith he took soldiers and centurions, and ran down upon them: and they, when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, left off beating Paul. 33 Then the chief captain came near, and laid hold on him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and inquired who he was, and what he had done. 34 And some shouted one thing, some another, among the crowd: and when he could not know the certainty for the uproar, he commanded him to be brought into the castle. 35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the crowd; 36 for the multitude of the people followed after crying out, Away with him.

37 And as Paul was about to be brought into the castle, he saith unto the chief captain, May I say something unto thee? And he said, Dost thou know Greek? 38 Art thou not then the Egyptian, who before these days stirred up to sedition and led out into the wilderness the four thousand men of the Assassins? 39 But Paul said, I am a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beseech thee, give me leave to speak unto the people.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. Paul's Reception at Jerusalem, verses 17-19. The leaders of the church at Jerusalem received Paul cordially. James was in the company that greeted him, but Peter seems not to have been present. Paul came to them with a wonderful story of how the gospel message had been received among the Grecian Jews and Gentiles, and with abundant proof of their regard for the mother church in the collection which they had contributed out of their deep poverty. It is evident that Paul had thought this gathering of contributions from his Gentile churches to be "the crowning act," as Professor Ramsay declares, of his work in the four Gentile provinces of Galatia, Asia, Macedonia and Achaia. Yet there is no mention of any expression of gratitude on the part of the receivers. The omission is pathetic to one who has followed with intense interest Paul's course and aim.

Apparently the apostles and elders of Jerusalem passed at once to what was uppermost in their own minds. The theological and theoretical overshadowed the practical in this early Christian group as they have done all too often in all the ages since.

A somewhat similar spirit reigned among the representatives of the Church of England in Africa a few years since. Missionaries were eager to tell of their labors and successes, but these High Churchmen said, "Brothers, we hear that you have received at your Communion table missionaries who do not belong to our sect."

II. A Scheme to Appease the Jews, verses 20-26. The leaders in Jerusalem were apprehensive of how the Jewish Christians would take Paul's visit. "You see, brother Paul," the elders said, "what great numbers of Jews here have become followers of the Way, and they are all zealous for the scrupulous keeping of the law." To those Hebrew Christians Paul's wonderful missionary success would be of little moment compared with the question whether Paul himself kept every jot and tittle of the ancient Hebrew law. "These new converts will hear of your coming, Paul, and will regard you with suspicion," con-

tinued the brethren, "for they have been told that you teach the Jews to forsake the laws of Moses and the customs of our fathers."

Then they asked Paul to do what they thought would win over his critics. Let him pay the charges for four men who had made a Nazirite vow and purify himself with them, that all might see that he observed the law. The proposal evidently seemed to Paul, to paraphrase one of his own statements, only the becoming a Jew to the Jews that he might gain the Jews. The proposal involved no matter of principle and he consented. It was deemed a work of piety to help needy Jews meet the expense of sacrifices offered when their vows were paid. The expense in this case consisted for each of the four men a lamb for a burnt offering, a lamb for a sin-offering, a ram for a peace-offering, and also meat-offerings and drink-offerings, Num. 6.14, 15. Professor Ramsay believes that Paul had recently inherited money which enabled him not only to pay for these sacrifices but also to meet the great costs that were before him in his protracted imprisonment.

Paul's conduct in this matter has been discussed from many angles. Some say that Paul might have consented without any contradiction of his principles, but that he could not do so from the motives suggested by James. Calvin thinks that Paul would have done more wisely if he "had remonstrated with James and the elders for not having done more toward clearing the minds of their converts from Jewish prejudices."

"When once the seventh chapter of The Acts has been passed, where the record of the first things in Jerusalem come to an end, whence the Church emerges in her representative capacity, she is seen attempting compromise, pursuing the policy of accommodation. It is a little difficult for her to receive the testimony of Peter concerning the work in the house of Cornelius. She was suspicious of the movement in Samaria. With difficulty there was wrested from her the granting of the charter of freedom to the Gentiles. She pursued a policy of accommodation, receiving into her fellowship those who had made no break with Judaism" (G. Campbell Morgan).

III. How the Scheme Turned out, verses 27-30. The scheme of the elders did not turn out as expected because Jews from Asia, Paul's old enemies, were in the city and they stirred up a riot. It was Pentecost, and Jews from everywhere were in Jerusalem. These Jews were amazed to see Paul, whom they considered a bitter enemy of Judaism, taking part in the temple services. They raised a cry that quickly collected a mob. "Men of Israel, help," they cried: "this is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people and the law and this place. Moreover," they added, "he brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath defiled this holy place." They had seen him with Jews for whose vows he was paying, and they jumped to the conclusion—or made up the accusation—that they were Greeks, for they had seen him earlier on the streets of Jerusalem with a Greek, Trophimus the Ephesian, no doubt one of the custodians of the collection brought for the poor of Jerusalem.

> A vast amount of damage is done by the substitution of supposition for fact. Wrong motives are imputed, intentions are misrepresented, impressions are presented as facts, with the consequence that reputations are besmirched and lives are made miserable.

All the city was moved, the mob dragged Paul out of the temple enclosure that the sacred precincts might not be polluted by his blood, and the temple guard hastily shut the gates between the courts.

IV. Rescued by the Roman Guard, verses 31-36. Tidings came to Claudius Lysias, chief captain of the Roman Guard, up in the Tower of Antonia which overlooked the temple court, that all Jerusalem was in confusion. With soldiers and centurions he ran down the stairs, and by his timely intervention Paul's life was saved, for he was being beaten to death by the mob. Lysias ordered Paul bound with chains till he could investigate the trouble. "Who is he? What has he done?" he demanded, but could learn nothing from the chorus of accusations shouted by the mob. Lysias then ordered Paul brought up into the tower, but such was the frenzy of the mob who were shouting "Away with him!" that the soldiers had to hold him aloft beyond their reach.

"Clearly the bulk of the crowd could not answer either of the questions

of Lysias, though they could bellow, 'Away with him!' till their throats were sore. It is a perfect picture of a mob, which is always ferocious and volubly explanatory in proportion to its ignorance" (Alexander Maclaren).

V. Paul's Request, verses 37-39. "May I say something unto thee!" courteously Paul asked. He spoke in the Greek language, and in surprise Lysias questioned, "Dost thou know Greek?" and then Lysias, in his turn, jumped to a conclusion and continued, "Art thou not then the Egyptian who before these days stirred up sedition and led out into the wilderness the four thousand men of the Assassins?" The Assassins, or Sicarii, Dagger Men, were members of a secret society who carried a short sword or dagger which they did not hesitate to use to remove those whom they counted disloyal to Israel. A large number of them were killed or captured by the Procurator Felix, but their leader, the Egyptian, apparently had made his escape.

Lysias learned that his prisoner, instead of being a fanatic of Judea, was not a native of Palestine but "a citizen of no mean city," Tarsus in Cilicia, and was a cultured Grecian Jew. Perhaps it was his surprise which led Lysias to grant Paul's most unusual request that he might speak to the people.

VI. Paul's Address, 22.1-21. Torn and bleeding as he was, and chained to two soldiers, Paul stood there on the stairway leading up to the tower, stood there above that howling mob who were thirsting for his blood, and addressed them in their own language, Aramaic, a dialect of the Hebrew. He defended himself from the charge that he was an enemy of the people, of the law and of the temple. He told them facts about his birth, education as a Pharisee, and persecution of Christians, and his consenting to the stoning of Stephen. He told of his being changed on the way to Damascus from a bigoted Pharisee into a zealous Christian, and of his being sent by Christ to the Gentiles.

What a challenge to us is this speech of Paul's! Scores of opportunities to "say a good word for Christ" are passed up daily. Paul passed up none. Even in the excitement of his life at stake, Paul saw in the mob only an audience to whom he could bear witness to his Lord.

VII. Saved from the Mob and from Scourging, 22.22-29. The mob listened to Paul until he mentioned the Gentiles, and then they clamored for his death. Lysias ordered Paul brought into the castle and examined by scourging to ascertain what all the shouting had been about, but when Paul quietly asked if it were lawful to scourge a Roman citizen uncondemned Lysias became troubled because he had had him bound.

VIII. Before the Sanhedrin, 22.30 to 23.11. On the morrow Lysias ordered the Sanhedrin to assemble and brought Paul before them. Paul threw a bomb into their midst by saying, "I am a Pharisee, a son of a Pharisee: touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." This gave rise to dissension between Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection, and Pharisees, who did. Fearing that Paul would be torn in pieces by the excited men, Lysias ordered Paul rescued from them and brought into the castle.

IX. Sent to Felix at Cæsarea, 23.12-35. Learning that forty Jews had plotted to kill him on the way to another trial before the Sanhedrin, which they expected to arrange with Lysias, Paul sent word to Lysias of the fact and the latter hurried him away to Felix at Cæsarea, where he was kept in ward.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

He brought Greeks into the temple and hath defiled this holy place, verse 28. A flight of seventy-five steps led from the outer court of the temple to the inner court, or Court of the Women, and at their foot was a stone balustrade beyond which no Gentile was allowed to pass. Notices were attached to this balustrade bearing an inscription which read: "Let no Gentile enter inside of the barrier and the fence around the sanctuary. Any one trespassing will bring death upon himself as a penalty."

He took soldiers and centurions and ran down upon them, verse 32. "Just as in recent years before the Great War Turkish soldiers were always prepared to pour down from the house of the Turkish Government on the first occurrence of any discord between the Greek and Latin churches, so it was the custom of

the Roman Commander of the Tower of Antonia to post detachments of soldiers along the roof of the cloister which connected the fortress with the temple area —ready at any moment to rush down the stairs and plunge into the very midst of the crowded worshipers. What occurred on one occasion was singularly characteristic. While standing there at guard, one of the Roman soldiers, weary of having nothing to do, and disgusted with watching what he despised as the mummeries of these hateful Jews, expressed his contempt for them by a gesture of insult. Instantly the Jews were plunged into a paroxysm of fury. They cursed the new Procurator, and began to pelt the soldiers with stones. Fearing that the Antonia detachment would be too weak to cope with so savage an onslaught, Cumanus marched his entire force around from the Prætorium. At the clash of their footsteps and the gleam of their swords, the wretched, unarmed mass of pilgrims was struck with panic, and made a rush to escape. The gates of the temple were choked up, and a multitude, variously stated at ten to twenty thousand, were trampled and crushed to death."

Soldiers of a Roman Legion
From the Arch of Constantine, Rome

Of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city, verse 39. "All the feeling of patriotism which now binds us to our country irrespective of the town to which we belong, was in ancient times directed toward one's city. 'Fatherland' denoted one's city, and not one's country. Moreover, citizenship implied much more in ancient times than it means now. We can now migrate to a new city and almost immediately acquire citizenship there, losing it in our former home. But in ancient days the Tarsian who migrated to another city continued to rank as a Tarsian, and Tarsus was still his Fatherland, while in his new home he was merely a resident alien. His descendants, too, continued to be mere resident aliens. Occasionally, and as a special compliment, a resident alien was granted the citizenship with his descendants, but a special enactment was needed in each individual case and family. The city that was his Fatherland and his home mattered much to Paul."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

When Paul's work at Ephesus was brought to an end by the riot, he went to Macedonia. At Philippi Titus joined him and brought good news from the church at Corinth. After several months spent in "these parts"—Philippi, Thessalonica, Berœa—he went back to the church at Corinth. During his three months' sojourn there he wrote his Epistle to the Romans.

With the money he had collected from the various Gentile churches for the poor in Jerusalem Paul purposed sailing directly from the port of Corinth to the holy city, but a plot against his life led him to change his route and go back by the way he had come, through Macedonia. He had hoped to be in Jerusalem for the Passover, but, failing in that because of the longer route, he next planned to be there for Pentecost, the feast at which free-will offerings were made by the Jews. Luke seems to have joined him at Philippi. From Neapolis, the port of Philippi, he sailed to Troas where the other delegates to Jerusalem were awaiting him, and there he spent a week.

Paul crossed the promontory to Assos and joined the delegates on a coasting vessel which stopped at various ports on its way to Miletus. In spite of much urging he refused to visit Miletus, "for he was hastening if it were possible for him, to be in Jerusalem the day of Pentecost." He sent for the elders of the

church at Ephesus, however, to meet him at Miletus, and there on the shore he took his affecting farewell from them. Read Acts 20.17-37.

Continuing his journey, Paul and his companions came to Patara where they disembarked for a ship sailing directly to Tyre. At Tyre, and again at Cæsarea, where Paul lodged in the house of Philip, he was warned of the danger that awaited him at Jerusalem, but he would not be deterred from his purpose. From Cæsarea, Luke states with unusual exactness, "we took up our baggage and went up to Jerusalem."

The scene of our lesson text is in the temple courts and on the stairs leading up to the Tower of Antonia. The Tower of Antonia was a fortress and a castle all in one, erected at the northeast corner of the temple area. It was an immense structure divided into splendid apartments. Josephus says that having everything necessary in itself, it seemed a city, while in magnificence it resembled a palace. At each corner there was a tower, the tallest being the one which overlooked the whole temple area. In this tower soldiers were always quartered, and when the Jews celebrated their great annual festivals an extra number of soldiers was always brought there to watch the people.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

BEARING TESTIMONY IN THE HOLY CITY

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with The Historical Background. What were the driving impulses that made Paul doggedly determined to go to Jerusalem in the face of all peril and opposition? His great objective as given in The Acts was to take the collection to the poor in Jerusalem and show the church there the generosity of his Gentile churches. Perhaps he felt also that there was need for another reporting to the apostles at Jerusalem to insure their remaining unmoved by the rising tide of antagonism to the "foreign fields"; perhaps he wished to refresh his spirit in the fellowship of the temple service with his people; perhaps he had premonition that in some way this visit was to be God's way of taking his messenger to Rome. At Assos, at Miletus, at Tyre, at Cæsarea,

> "He saw a hand they could not see
> Which beckoned him away.
> He heard a voice they could not hear
> Which would not let him stay."

Bearing Testimony in the Holy City. Paul found the church at Jerusalem composed, as James said, of many thousands of believers and all zealous for the law. Evidently they diligently observed all the Jewish rites and differed from other Jews only in acknowledging Jesus as the Messiah. It was to such a church that Paul came expecting to bear witness to his Lord.

He came to bear testimony in a specific way. He had prepared carefully for it and expected it to be effective. He proposed to show the fruits of the gospel among the Gentiles. For long months he had been urging the Gentile Christians to a great liberality that their poor suffering fellow Christians in Jerusalem might be relieved. He had been at great pains to make the gift of the Gentiles an act of a high spiritual partnership between themselves and God and those who were to receive: 2 Cor. 9.12-15. With him came a goodly company of delegates (20.4) appointed by their various churches to convey with Paul not this money only but their love for their brethren in Jerusalem and their joy in the common heritage of God's love in Christ. This was to be Paul's great testimony. But this failed because it never was given a chance. The contention about forms closed in upon this concrete bit of testimony and overwhelmed it.

If James and the elders had explained to the church at Jerusalem this gift which Paul had brought from the Gentile churches, expressing gratitude for it and praise to God for the spirit of goodwill, sympathy and brotherliness out of which it had sprung, if they had made plain to the Jews the mind and heart which this gift revealed, it is easy to believe that Paul's testimony to his gospel might have had a more satisfactory hearing in Jerusalem.

The witnessing which James and the others asked of Paul was to carry out the rites of the Mosaic ritual and thus to prove to the church that he was still a Jew. But had that succeeded, it would not have commended "his gospel."

Paul did bear testimony in his speech on the stairway to the mob. It was a good speech. It was a conciliatory speech. He kept back the word "Gentiles" as long as he could, but the moment he said God had concern for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews, the storm broke, they would listen no longer. He could preach in Jerusalem only as long as he did not touch upon the distinctive note of his gospel.

Should Paul Have Acceded to the Request of James? It was a tedious and expensive business. Paul would have to live in the temple for a week, pay at least for sixteen animals for the sacrifices, and share the ceremonial purification with the Nazirites, and all to prove that he believed in the Jewish law. One would think that if he had no doubt about the sanctity of it to begin with, he would have considerable doubts as to its sanity before he got through so trying a business. Paul was a Christian gentleman and this was poor business for any Christian gentleman. And yet, for the sake of peace, he undertook to do it, and the outcome was a tragedy. The situation was hopeless to begin with; the difference between Paul and the conservative element in the Jerusalem church was too profound to be reconciled by a ceremony.

More than that, his very presence in the temple was bound to irritate his critics; they would simply add the accusation of hypocrisy to all their other charges against him and dislike him so much the more. The elders would better have told him to leave Jerusalem at once and go back to his work, or Paul would better have told them that, the situation being what it was, it was no use to try to patch it up with a compromise. But all this is merely "might have been," and the event went on to its issue.—Gaius Glenn Atkins, in the Sunday School World.

Paul of the Days of Gamaliel and Paul of the Days of James. Paul was a man of cosmopolitan outlook, but one city had won his devotion in a way which no other could rival. It was the city of his race—glittering with golden memories. It was the city of the prophets, with their far-flung, imperial words. It was the city of a noble worship and of a people mastered by a passionate loyalty to their high and righteous God, and, more intimate and personal than all this, it was the city where he had come as a wide-eyed, eager boy to sit at the feet of the great teacher Gamaliel and learn the meaning of life and the purposes of God in the world.

Very different from that temperamental, delicately organized boy, sensing everything with eager responsiveness, was the travel-scarred, disciplined veteran of the cross who now came to Jerusalem with the weight of the whole world pressing upon his heart. He had been scorned and hated; he had met the hard blows of terrible hatred. But his eye still gleamed with the light of a great enthusiasm. His heart was on fire with the passion of an unalterable purpose. He heard about Jerusalem with a thousand memories tugging at his mind. But through them all one thing dominated his thought and feeling. Neither Jewish history nor his own boyhood said the last or deepest word. The vision of the One whom Jerusalem had crucified was the possessing theme of his thought. The coronation of the Crucified was the master purpose of his life.—Lynn H. Hough.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. The difficult art of compromise. The ethics of the plan proposed by the apostles to meet the prejudices of the Jews. Was Paul's act a concession or was it a compromise? Was the plan deceitful? It did not prosper; why not? "When you are in Rome, do as the Romans do," is an old adage: what light does this event throw upon it? "One may readily perform a certain action where no principle is at issue, and yet utterly refuse to do the same thing when a principle is clearly at stake."

2. Lynch law. There is no grievance that is a fit object of redress by mob law.—Lincoln.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read Acts 25, 26, 27, and 28. 2. Why was Paul allowed by the Roman government to preach? 3. What letters did Paul write during his imprisonment at Rome? 4. Is the way the Book of The Acts ends satisfactory or not, and why? 5. What is your opinion of Paul?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

PAUL FACES HIS ENEMIES

Beginning the Lesson. Paul knew that he was going into the lions' den when he went to Jerusalem. He had become notorious to the Jews everywhere, and he had had many monitions of what might happen to him if he went to Jerusalem. When he was all ready to sail from Corinth, what plot against him did he discover, and how did it affect his course? Look up Acts 20.1-3. He told the Ephesians as he talked with them on the shore of Miletus that "the Holy Spirit testifieth unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me." What did the disciples at Tyre say to him, Acts 21.4? What did Agabus say to him at Cæsarea, and how did he illustrate his words, Acts 21.11? But in spite of all these warnings Paul continued on his way to the Holy City, declaring to the disciples at Cæsarea, "I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." And you recall how Luke says that when he would not be persuaded, "we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done."

> "Great duties are before me, and great songs;
> And whether crowned or crownless when I fall;
> It matters not, so as God's work is done."

Paul's Courage. We cannot doubt Paul's courage. He is the apostle of the lion heart. He is not only physically courageous, but he is morally courageous. He is conscious of the righteousness of his cause, and is unflinching in his fidelity to his Lord. Emerson says a hero is one "who, taking both reputation and life in his hand, will with perfect urbanity dare the gibbet and the mob by the absolute truth and rectitude of his behavior." Such a hero was Paul.

D. A. Hayes, in his book entitled Paul and His Epistles, says of Paul's courage: "There never is a hint anywhere in the Epistles of Paul that he is willing to shade the truth in the least degree in order to curry favor with any opponent. He stands by his guns. His courage mounts as perils thicken. There were dangers and disappointments all along the way. There were suffering and sacrifice of every sort. There were incredible toils and continual hardships. Through them all Paul approved himself as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. He faced the mobs of Jerusalem, Ephesus, and Philippi with fearless bravery; and they always felt that they had to do with a dauntless, royal spirit when they tried to lay hands upon him. He was a man always. He was a hero everywhere. He had the absolute courage of his convictions, and there are not many men in any century or in all the centuries of whom that can be said in truth."

What Some People Cannot Stand. Little Rachael Appleby, a real old-fashioned young one, you know, and always asking queer questions—she wanted to know the other day what denomination the apostles was; said she supposed of course they was Congos—what we call the Congregationals 'round here, you know. When I asked her what made her think that, she said they was such good, pious men, and they preached real Congo doctrine. But little Nathan Warner was along, and his folks go to the Baptist meeting. So he declared there wasn't a Congo in the whole lot of 'postles, and spoke of John the Baptist. And Rachael she up and said that was before the Lord had come to earth and started the Congo church.

And this set me to thinking, as I've often done before, what little teenty, trifling things will hurt and break up and sometimes nigh about destroy a faith it took a great, an awful sacrifice to 'stablish. You know, most of you, how I feel about sects and such. They've got to be, as long as we humans are what we are. I used to think and talk many years ago about church union's they call it, and hope and pray 'twould come about. But one time it struck me sudden that what I meant by church union was the coming over to the Congos, my own church, of all other denominations, and that was what I was praying for. Took me all aback, and I began to wonder if all the other church unionists prayed the same way!

When Paul told those Jews that wonderful story of his being converted and the orders the Lord gave him about preaching to Gentiles as well as the Jews, they just broke out on him, and again, as had happened so many times, he

was bound and taken away. I'm afraid there's plenty of that feeling among the sects these days, too. The one thing they can't stand is the idea that another set of believers is as good as their kind.—Annie Trumbull Slosson.

Paul's Enemies "Supposed." The supposition of Paul's enemies was wholly groundless. They had met him walking along the streets of Jerusalem in the company of a Greek. Then they saw him in the court of the temple with four Jews whom they did not know, and they supposed they were Greeks; and next they declared, "He brought Greeks into the temple, and hath defiled this holy place."

This is the way many evil stories about people start: a suspicion is aroused, a supposition is formulated, and finally a certainty is stated. Somebody suspects some one of not being honorable or just or honest, he supposes that he is guilty of this or that wrong-doing, and then he tells his supposition to a third person as a fact. "A good man does an entirely harmless and proper thing, but some one imagines something wrong back of it, and reports his imagination as a fact, and a character is blackened. Many a scandal grows out of what some evil-disposed person supposes. We have no right to 'suppose' that another has done a wrong thing, much less to state our supposition as a fact. A large proportion of the miserable gossip which is retailed by idle people in drawing-rooms and other places is started just as this story about Paul was started."

Let us be careful how we judge others. If we find that we are given to drawing hasty conclusions on insufficient evidence in regard to the actions or motives of others, let us put a watch upon ourselves at this danger point. Let us be careful how we accuse others. "A good rule for the street corner as well as for the court room," says The Youth's Companion, "is to make no accusation which you cannot prove, and to believe no accusation which is not proved to you."

Ignorant Suppositions. A continuous stream of persons passed through the Art Gallery, and a woman sitting there listened with no small amusement to the comments made upon a certain small portrait by a distinguished American artist. The picture was of a young girl, sitting bolt upright on a straight-backed chair, a small, hard pillow placed stiffly between her back and the chair. The child had on a little blue sack and looked out of the canvas with bright, wistful eyes.

"880. Sargent. Of course. How exactly like him with his continual mannerisms. To pose a poor child in that awkward and difficult position. No girl would ever sit so of her own accord." Such were the frequent expressions of the many. Finally an elderly woman, beautifully dressed, her face alive with intelligence, came in search of a particular picture. Stopping before the small head she examined it with manifest satisfaction, and turned to her companion with moist eyes.

"You know this dear child has a great affliction, a hardening of the spine, so that her back is stiff and this is her habitual posture. She has a lovely character, as one may see shining from these eyes, and Sargent has translated it to the life. Without the pose he has given her, however, something would have seemed lacking. As it is, it is perfect."

The woman on the bench grew thoughtful. Is it always so, she asked herself, that everything has its explanation? that what we condemn as exaggerated or false is simply something we do not yet understand? and that our hasty conclusions merely stamp us as ignorant?—Lucy Elliot Keeler.

Sentence Sermon. "Difficulties in the way do not signify that God does not want us to walk in it."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read what has happened to Paul between our last lesson and this. 2. What do you know about Nero, the emperor to whom Paul appealed? 3. Trace on the map Paul's journey to Rome. 4. With what Christians from Rome had Paul lived at Corinth? 5. What did Paul say in Phil. 1.12-14 about the result of his imprisonment at Rome? 6. Would the fact that Paul was chained to a soldier help or hinder him in his work? 7. Can we treat our untoward experiences in the spirit that Paul did his?

LESSON VIII—NOVEMBER 22

PAUL IN ROME

GOLDEN TEXT: I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me. Philippians 4.13

LESSON Acts 25.1-12; 28.16-31 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 2.2-4

ACTS 28.16 And when we entered into Rome, Paul was suffered to abide by himself with the soldier that guarded him.

17 And it came to pass, that after three days he called together those that were the chief of the Jews: and when they were come together, he said unto them, I, brethren, though I had done nothing against the people, or the customs of our fathers, yet was delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans: 18 who, when they had examined me, desired to set me at liberty, because there was no cause of death in me. 19 But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had aught whereof to accuse my nation. 20 For this cause therefore did I entreat you to see and to speak with "me": for because of the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. 21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters from Judæa concerning thee, nor did any of the brethren come hither and report or speak any harm of thee. 22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against.

23 And when they had appointed him a day, they came to him into his lodging in great number; to whom he expounded "the matter," testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening. 24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. Rome at Last, verse 16. While still in Ephesus Paul declared that after he had been to Jerusalem he must see Rome. Little did he realize that more than three years, packed with surprising happenings, would elapse before he reached Rome in chains. He "must see Rome." Just as the cohorts and representatives of the Roman government and the merchants of Roman trade went out to all the world along the far-extending network of Roman roads, so Paul expected the message of Christ and his triumphant reign to go out over those same roads to the last corner of the Roman world.

Rome was the great climax of Paul's work and of Luke's history. In his eagerness which he shared with the apostle in achieving their long-desired goal, Luke inserts in his record a sort of double arrival. In verse fourteen he says, "So we came to Rome," and again in verse sixteen he adds, "And when we entered into Rome." Paul was shown much leniency during his stay in Rome. Possibly the good report of Festus and Agrippa concerning the prisoner they had sent them gave Paul an advantage, and without doubt Julius, the centurion whom Paul had helped on the voyage, interceded for him. Instead of being kept in the guardhouse of the Prætorian camp Paul was allowed to hire a house, or lodging, and live there by himself with the soldier who guarded him, and to whom he was chained. He often alludes to these chains in his letters, as he does to the prominent Jews of Rome who came to visit him, verse 20. See 2 Tim. 1.16; Col. 4.3; Philemon 10; Eph. 6.20.

There was a frequent change of soldiers, and thus Paul had an opportunity of spreading his message widely among the Prætorian guard. In Philippians 1.13 Paul says that his bonds had enabled him to preach Christ "throughout the whole Prætorian guard."

> The chain on Paul's wrist was his chance to have a listener to his message, and he could write to the Philippians, "I would have you know that the things which have happened to me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel." Handicaps can be counted just handicaps, or capital on which to do the business in hand. It is a great art to make one's handicaps one's tools, the very instruments of one's success. Every one knows how Bunyan turned Bedford Jail into Pilgrim's Progress.

II. Paul Confers with the Leading Jews of Rome, verses 17-22. After resting only three days, Paul summoned the leading Jews of the city to an interview.

To them he explained his presence there as a prisoner. Though he had done nothing against his people nor had in any way violated the customs of their fathers, he had been delivered up by the Jews of Jerusalem to Roman authorities as a prisoner. The latter had been ready to set him at liberty, but when the Jews opposed this he had been forced to appeal to Cæsar. He had sent for them to tell them that because of the hope of Israel, the Messianic hope, he had been put in chains.

The Jews answered that they had had no written or verbal report from Jerusalem concerning Paul. This was natural, as not enough time had elapsed for the Jerusalem Jews to report their side of the case to Rome. They desired to hear what Paul had to say, they cautiously added, although they knew that "this sect" (speaking of the sect of the Nazarenes, Acts 24.5, as they would of the sect of the Sadducees) was everywhere condemned. It may be that they knew more than they professed to know.

III. Preaching and Teaching in Rome, verses 23-30. A special day was appointed when great numbers of Jews came to Paul's lodging to hear him. He declared to them the spiritual nature of the Kingdom of God (for the common Jewish belief was in a temporal kingdom), and by recalling the law and the prophets, he endeavored to persuade them to believe in Jesus. All day he preached, and the result was, as always, that some believed and some disbelieved. Most of them disbelieved. Dissension arose. Some bitterness developed. Paul closed the interview by quoting Isaiah, and declared he knew that the Gentiles, unto whom God had sent his salvation, would hear him.

> "Most of us have now and then to endure forced pauses in life. We suffer the isolation of the sick chamber, are excluded from office, exchange busy life for retirement, obscurity, leisure. Let us beware of giving place to weariness, depression, inaction. Let us see if the suspended career is not a new opportunity; one, perhaps, designed to give us the time of our life" (W. L. Watkinson).

For two whole years Paul remained a prisoner in his own hired house. Such delays in bringing a prisoner to trial were not unknown. To all who came to him Paul proclaimed the Kingdom of God, and taught them concerning Jesus, with all boldness, none forbidding him. The unimpeded success of Paul's preaching is, as Lightfoot remarks, "a fitter termination to the history than any other incident which could have been chosen. It is the most striking realization of that promise of the universal spread of the gospel which is the starting point of the narrative."

> "The New Acts of the Apostles is now being written. He who realizes that the God within the Bible is the God within our own perplexed life—individual, social, national—and dares apply the visions of the old time to the problems of the new, is in the true apostolic succession" (W. H. P. Faunce).

IV. The Fate of Paul. Many reasons have been put forth for Luke's not giving any information as to the fate of Paul. Possibly his own death came before Paul's. We know that while a prisoner Paul wrote his letters to the Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and Philemon.

From Philemon 22, we know that Paul was expecting a speedy release, and it is generally believed that his expectation was realized. Professor Ramsay believes that Paul was detained at Rome to await the coming of his persecutors to testify against him. The trial could not begin until there was an accuser to state the ground of complaint. The Palestinian Jews failed to come; they knew their case was too weak to be put forward in a Roman court. Two successive Roman governors of Palestine had said Paul was guiltless. Their nonappearance kept Paul imprisoned the "two years." The law presumed the accused innocent after eighteen months. (This was later the law, and Professor Ramsay argues plausibly that it was a law enacted some years before Paul's time by the Emperor Claudius.) The space of two years is equivalent to the legal term of eighteen months, together with additional time required for the formalities of release. There was, therefore, no proper "first trial," but only an acquittal in default.

Tradition says that after his release Paul visited Spain. From 1 Timothy and Titus (believed to have been written later than the first imprisonment),

we learn that he went to Greece, Crete, Ephesus, and Macedonia, passing through Troas, and that he intended spending the winter at Nicopolis in Epirus. In July, 64, the greater part of Rome was burned over, and Nero, to divert suspicion from himself, accused the Christians of having set the fire. Multitudes of Christians were put to death after horrible tortures, many of them being burnt as torches in the emperor's garden on the Vatican hill.

By the middle of June, A.D. 68, Nero had died in disgrace, and tradition says that before then Paul met his fate. Even tradition supplies only a few details, to the effect that he was beheaded on the Ostian Road, three miles from the city, and that a matron named Lucina, who lived beside this road, buried his body on her own land.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Last week we left Paul in the hands of Felix, the Governor of Judea, at Cæsarea. His case there dragged through many weary months. It is to be noted, however, that he was given great freedom of intercourse with his friends. Repeated hearings by Felix and his successor, Festus, led Paul finally to appeal his case to the Emperor and therefore to be sent to Rome for trial. The story of the voyage to Rome with its shipwreck and escape is told by Luke with vivid picturesqueness in Acts 27 and 28.

Throughout the story it is evident that Paul won both the confidence and the help of Roman officials. Unintentionally, but in a true sense, the Empire became protector and sponsor of Paul, providing him with a safety from Jewish intrigues and plots which he would not have enjoyed had he not been "an ambassador in chains."

Rome is on the Tiber about fifteen miles from its mouth. It was the capital of the Roman Empire and was the chief city of the world in wealth and splendor. It had a population at this time of 1,600,000. "Put New York and London and Paris and Berlin and Tokyo together and you have what Rome was to the civilized world over which it presided," is the way in which Dr. Hough shows its greatness. "It is not too much of an exaggeration to say that the Roman Empire had many towns and but one city. That city was Rome—Rome that made the world politically one. Paul had that in his mind and heart which could make the Empire spiritually one. An imperial man with an imperial message had come to the city."

Mamertine Prison

Beneath a church near the Forum is the Mamertine Prison, the reputed place of Paul's second imprisonment. On a high column erected by Marcus Aurelius in a piazza near the center of Rome there is a statue of Paul, the only memorial within the city. Outside the walls of Rome, a mile and a half away, a church was erected in the fourth century over the spot where Paul was supposed to have been buried. It has been many times restored,—and the present magnificent marble cathedral called St. Paul's Without the Walls was erected in 1854.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Each new guard as he came would be counted by Paul as affording an opportunity for a new friendship and for winning a new convert. We can imagine with what skill he would seek out points of contact with each new audience, and then with what sincere concern he would challenge each soldier to follow the Christ. His teaching would never be mechanical or perfunctory.

Are we all teaching our classes, however small they may be in members, with the same eagerness and concern as Paul taught his audiences in Rome? He took delight in telling his friends at Philippi how happily and remarkably successful this ministry to these audiences of one had been. When was the last time that you had an audience of one, and how did you use that opportunity?

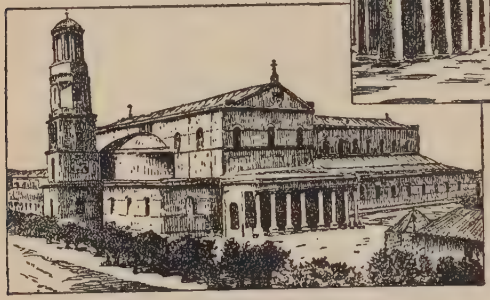
TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

PAUL'S MINISTRY IN THE WORLD'S CAPITAL

Beginning the Lesson. John Bunyan was thrust into prison by Royalist persecutors. Yet his heart was full of peace. He says: "As I was going forth of the doors, I had much ado to forbear saying to them that I carried the peace of God along with me; but I held my peace, and blessed be the Lord, went away to prison with God's comfort in my poor soul."

In Bedford, England, is preserved the jail door which for twelve years was locked on John Bunyan. Dr. Wayland Hoyt refers to the prayers which Bunyan must have pleaded for its opening, and exclaims: "But how fruitful were those years! Dreams were going on behind that door, and the world needed them. When the Pilgrim's Progress of which Bunyan dreamed had taken shape and tangibility, Bunyan's Lord, who had not forgotten him while the slow years passed, swung the jail door wide."

Interior of St. Paul's



St. Paul's Without the Walls

Like Bunyan, Paul went to his imprisonment with the peace of God in his heart, and the years that followed were most fruitful. For years Paul had been praying that he might see Rome. His prayer was answered, but in a way very different from what he had expected. How did he reach there? (Text Explained.)

Paul's Ministry in Rome. Paul's imprisonment turned out to the furtherance of his great purpose, that of making the gospel known to the uttermost part of the earth.

Said a minister once in the course of his sermon, "I wish I could be handcuffed to some of you for half an hour till you should hear me out!" Had Paul come to Rome a free man he never could have reached the Roman legions and Cæsar's household (Phil. 4.22) as he did through the soldiers to whom he was chained, one after another. In Philippians 1.12, 13, he recognizes this fact: "Now I would have you know, brethren," he writes, "that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel; so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole Prætorian Guard, and to all the rest." Then the example of his missionary activity from his place of confinement was a greater spur to the Christians in Rome than it could have been had he been free. His abode must have been their headquarters, and he further writes the Philippians that "Most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear." And how much more he accomplished for all people in all lands and ages through the letters he had opportunity to write than he could have done by personal ministry!

Paul's Imperialism. Paul's outlook always was imperial. He took the world for his parish from the very beginning. He was a little man with a great soul, like John Wesley. He never was satisfied with the territories traversed or the work already done. He always planned wider itineraries and greater things.

He was the incarnation of enterprise. He had a boundless ambition. His plans always outran his possibilities. He dreamed of a kingdom, world-wide and eternal.

He had something of the insatiability of the great conqueror, whose hunger for new territories is whetted as with demoniac power by every fresh conquest. As Jesus' leading trait was the shepherd's feeling, so Paul's was the missionary impulse. Everywhere he was only on the way; he had but one thought—to make the word speed on swiftly. He scaled the snowy heights of Taurus, whence he was drawn to the valleys of Lycaonia. He traveled on to the Ægean, where in a vision a man of Macedonia appeared to him and cried: "Come over and help us!" He came to Corinth, whence ships sailed to Italy; and straightway he wrote to Rome, as always in his prayers making request, "if by any means now at length he may be prospered by the will of God to come unto them." Voices across the sea called to him, "Come"; in hours of solitude he thought of those "who have not heard." This cry of "Ever onward" was the special watchword of his life.

Paul founded churches wherever he went, and he established them so firmly that they all stood when he had gone. His desire was to press on into places where Christ had not been preached as yet. He would have gone everywhere as a pioneer missionary, if that had been possible to one man in one lifetime. His church imperialism and his insatiable missionary enthusiasm were born of his theological universalism. He believed that it was the will of God that all men were to be saved, and he believed that Jesus would never be satisfied until that goal had been reached. Therefore he claimed all the nations for his Lord. —D. A. Hayes, in Paul and His Epistles.

Christianity a World Religion. The most significant historical and geographical fact relative to Christianity is that more than any other faith it has justified its claim to be a world religion. It is found literally the world over. Jesus Christ was a Jew and he built his religion on a Semitic foundation. His immediate followers were all Jews, and their early preaching was at first exclusively to members of their own race. Paul, the "apostle to the Gentiles," was the first who saw with eye undimmed the universal outlook of his Master, Jesus Christ, and succeeded in carrying the great majority of the Church with him in breaking down all the barriers between Jew and Gentile in the new Church. With Paul Christianity started on its career as the religion of the people of Europe. These peoples were conquered by the new religion, so that from an early day the prevailing features of Christianity have been European and not Semitic and Asiatic.

The story would be a long one, were we to recount the whole history of the conquest of the European races by Christianity. Two great stages mark the course of advance.

The first may be said to extend from the day of Pentecost, when Peter preached the first evangelistic Christian sermon in Jerusalem, to the Council of Nicea in 325, when, under summons of the Emperor Constantine, who had accepted the once despised cross of Jesus Christ as his emblem, the first great Christian council met to unify Christian belief and practice, as the Emperor had just succeeded in uniting the Empire politically.

The second stage of the Christian conquest of the European people falls in the Middle Ages. The feat accomplished by the Christian Church during these centuries was the winning of northern Europe to the Church. When the period opened, the center of European civilization was on the shores of the Mediterranean; when it closed, the scene had shifted to the North. The gift of Christianity to northern Europe was not only a new and satisfying religion, but civilization itself. The history of northern Europe virtually begins with the coming of the religion of Christ.

Since the Reformation, and in these latter days, Christianity is proving in a more marked degree than ever before its universal claims. The missionaries of the cross of Christ have gone to all lands and have established the Church among all people. Mohammedans have been converted, as have high caste Hindus, Chinese "literati," and patriotic Japanese. No other classes are more antagonistic to the gospel message than these, yet representatives of all have kneeled down to do homage to Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. In many lands and in divers tongues the name of Jesus is sung by children and his

power to save proclaimed by men and women whose first ray of light in the midst of heathen darkness came from the story of his love and sacrifice.—The Faiths of Mankind.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. Is the kind of evangelizing that Paul carried on in Rome still needed today? Are Christians expecting results from great pulpit preaching which can only come with audiences of one?

2. The place that Paul holds today.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What letters did Paul write while a prisoner in Rome? 2. How does Paul show his fine courtesy in his letter to Philemon? 3. How do you think Philemon reacted to this letter? 4. How will a true Christan treat one who has wronged him? 5. How does Christianity transform the relationship of employer and employed?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

A PRISONER PROCLAIMS THE GOSPEL IN ROME

Beginning the Lesson. It is difficult for us fully to realize the glory and might of ancient Rome. It exercised world-wide dominion. With its fabulous wealth, its arrogant might, its unchallenged sovereignty, its glutted pride, its self-complacent sufficiency, it presented a seemingly unassailable task for the gospel of the meek and lowly Nazarene. It took a great faith to believe that Rome could ever be captured for Christ.

How did God begin the assault upon this seemingly impregnable citadel of pagan power? If we did not have the record, we could never have guessed. He brought a man in chains to Rome. A prisoner of the Empire is the messenger of God, by whose word God will bring the whole imperial world to its knees before the Christ he preaches. The vast, majestic, powerful, rich and self-satisfied Roman empire is challenged by the voice of one man whose body is racked with pain, weakened by innumerable privations and burdens, and who comes to the Eternal City in bonds. Picture a lone man of a despised race, broken in health and under arrest, charged with a crime, going to the city of New York to call that city from its sin and its culture and demanding that it be converted. What would you think such a man's chance would be? Such was Paul's coming to Rome!

(By questions obtain the story of what happened to Paul between our last lesson and this.)

Proclaiming the Gospel in Rome. Paul took the conditions imposed upon him by his imprisonment as a matter of course, in the same way that he had taken the limitations to his time in having to work at a trade as a tentmaker to support himself, or the obstacles to his work in the antagonism he had to face everywhere. The account of his ministry in Rome as it is narrated in The Acts and in the letters which Paul wrote while there (Colossians, Philemon, Philippians, Ephesians) does not give any impression that the facts that he was a pioneer, that he was always chained to a soldier, that he could not go in person about the city, changed in any harmful way the regular routine of his teaching, preaching and planning as a missionary of Christ. Without rebelling against the circumscribing restraints imposed upon him, he set at once about the work he wanted to do in Rome.

If any one ever had good reasons to be irked by the limitations of his opportunity, it was Paul. Some might be ready to say that he would have been justified in not doing anything while big chances were closed to him. But that was not the spirit of Paul. He would have accepted the opportunity of a great audience with no more satisfaction than he had in the privilege which was his with the groups and individuals who came to listen to it. And it is altogether likely that he felt as deep or deeper responsibility for the soldiers, one after another, to whom he was chained as he would have felt for the crowds who would have gathered to hear him preach had he been free to go into the synagogue or market-place. His zeal, devotion and consecration to his work of witnessing for his Master continued unabated in Rome.

Another Prison Evangelist. In a disreputable quarrel Paul Graynor killed

a man and was sentenced to forty years' imprisonment. In prison he came to himself, was filled with remorse for his former life, and resolved to make the best possible use of the opportunities still left him. He became a sort of prison evangelist, and led many of his associates to seek and find the Savior whom he called his Master. He organized classes and taught stenography, bookkeeping and commercial arithmetic. Several of his pupils secured good positions upon their release. At the end of fifteen years a pardon was granted him, but he refused to accept it.

"Happy as he must have been that liberty was within reach," says The Youth's Companion, "and that he had so lived as thus to commend himself to the authorities of the prison and the commonwealth, he still refused to accept pardon. He sent word to the governor that he was worth nothing to the world outside, but that within the prison walls he had found a place of usefulness among his fellow convicts. So he faces the coming twenty-five years behind the bars with rejoicing that thus he may fulfil his mission among those whom he can assist toward lives of hope and usefulness.

"The lesson of this man's life is full of encouragement. The secret of it is the power of the spirit to conquer difficulties and break material bonds. The reason he is willing to remain in prison is because he has long since escaped from prison.

" 'Stone walls do not a prison make
Nor iron bars a cage.'

"Many a life that suffers from inevitable limitations which constitute a life imprisonment amid uncongenial surroundings might become radiant and beautiful if it could discover the secret of this convict. Many a heart beating its life out in bitter and unavailing protest against its unhappy conditions might become blessed in becoming a blessing to others."

How General Armstrong Met Untoward Circumstances. General Armstrong had an unconquerable spirit like Paul's. He was never discouraged. He used to tell a story which, he said, was his "rule of conduct." "Once there was a woodchuck. Now woodchucks can't climb trees. Well, this woodchuck was chased by a dog and came to a tree. He knew that if he could get up this tree the dog could not catch him. Now woodchucks can't climb trees, but this one had to, so he did!"

"Doing what can't be done is the glory of living!" he once exclaimed. "For most people," as one of his friends said, "an obstacle is something in the way to stop one from going on, but for General Armstrong it merely meant something to climb over; and if he could not climb all the way over, he would get as high as possible and then crow!"

One evening General Armstrong was to speak in a little church, but a driving storm of sleet kept people away. There was only a score of men and women who evidently had nothing to contribute to the cause for which he was to speak—Hampton College. But "in the midst of the bleakness and emptiness rose the worn, gaunt soldier, as bravely and gladly as if a multitude were hanging on his words. His deep-sunk eyes looked out beyond the bleakness of the scene into the world of his ideals, and the cold little place was aglow with the fire that was in him."

Sentence Sermons.

Make us to meet what is or is to be
With fervid welcome, knowing it is sent
To serve us in some way full excellent,
Though we discern it all belatedly.—James Whitcomb Riley.

I have lived, seen God's hand through a lifetime, and all was for best.—Browning.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How many letters in the New Testament were written by Paul? 2. Read the entire letter to Philemon. 3. Why did Paul write this letter? 4. What reports of Philemon filled Paul's heart with joy? 5. What does this letter tell you about the character of Philemon?

LESSON IX—NOVEMBER 29

PAUL'S LETTER TO PHILEMON

GOLDEN TEXT: There can be neither bond nor free . . . for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3.28

LESSON Philemon DEVOTIONAL READING 1 John 4.7-13

PHILEMON 4 I thank my God always, making mention of thee in my prayers, 5 hearing of thy love, and of the faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all the saints; 6 that the fellowship of thy faith may become effectual, in the knowledge of every good thing which is in you, unto Christ. 7 For I had much joy and comfort in thy love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through thee, brother.

8 Wherefore, though I have all boldness in Christ to enjoin thee that which is befitting, 9 yet for love's sake I rather beseech, being such a one as Paul the aged, and now a prisoner also of Christ Jesus: 10 I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus, 11 who once was unprofitable to thee but now is profitable to thee and to me: 12 whom I have sent back to thee in his own person, that is, my very heart: 13 whom I would fain have kept with me, that in thy behalf he might minister unto me in the bonds of the gospel: 14 but without thy mind I would do nothing; that thy goodness should not be as of necessity, but of free will. 15 For perhaps he was therefore parted "from thee" for a season, that thou shouldest have him for ever; 16 no longer as a servant, but more than a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much rather to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord. 17 If then thou countest me a partner, receive him as myself. 18 But if he hath wronged thee at all, or oweth "thee" aught, put that to mine account; 19 I Paul write it with mine own hand, I will repay it: that I say not unto thee that thou owest to me even thine own self besides. 20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my heart in Christ.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Introduction to the Letter, verses 1-3. This letter was sent to Philemon by the hand of Tychicus, who was going to Colossæ and Laodicæa with other letters from Paul to the churches there. Timothy was with Paul and joined him, "a prisoner of Christ Jesus," Paul writes, in sending greeting to Philemon, and to Apphia and Archippus, presumably Philemon's wife and son, and to the church that met in his house.

> "The designation of Philemon as fellow-worker may imply some actual coöperation at a former time. But more probably the phrase, like the similar one in the next verse, 'our fellow-soldier,' is but Paul's gracefully affectionate way of lifting these good people's humbler work out of its narrowness by associating it with his own. They in their little sphere, and he in his wider, were workers at the same task. All who toil for furtherance of Christ's Kingdom, however widely they may be parted by time or distance, are fellow-workers" (The Expositor's Bible).

II. Thanksgiving for Philemon's Faith, Love and Service, verses 4-7. Philemon was a man of means, possibly one of the converts of Paul during his stay in Ephesus, and was greatly esteemed and tenderly loved by the apostle because of the way Philemon used his wealth and influence. His home was the meeting place of the church in Colossæ. Paul in his distant prison had been greatly heartened and refreshed by reports of his ministries of love to the Christians in his city. Paul tells Philemon of this, and of his prayer and praise to God because of him.

"Hearing of thy love, and of the faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus," Paul writes. "The arrangement may have been intentional, and the apostle meant to suggest that at the heart of Philemon's love to the saints was his faith in the Lord Jesus: that the source and fountain of his philanthropy was his religion, and that without religion there would have been no philanthropy at all—it was born of his religion and sprang out of his religion. The reason for his lavish kindness to the saints was that the love of Christ constrained him" (J. D. Jones).

His faith issued in practical usefulness. Religion always does so when

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Rembrandt

PAUL THE AGED

it is real. The connection between religion and philanthropy is that between the tree and its fruits. . . . Unless religion makes us kind and helpful and loving to our fellows we are not Christian at all. There is no such thing as a selfish, hard, greedy, grasping Christian. A selfish Christian is a contradiction in terms (J. D. Jones).

III. Intercession for Onesimus, verses 8-21. "Wherefore"—thus Paul begins his intercession for Onesimus, Philemon's runaway slave. Paul's "wherefore" means that since Philemon has proved himself good in so many particulars, especially in his love and care of the followers of Christ (as he has just written), Paul will expect from him the further proof of his goodness, that he will forgive Onesimus and welcome him kindly on his return.

Wherefore, rather than use my apostolic authority and command you, as well I might, to do that which is befitting, I rather plead with you as Paul the aged, the prisoner for the sake of Jesus Christ, in behalf of my child, Onesimus. Onesimus was a convert of Paul's and therefore Paul calls him his child. It is "for love's sake"—love for himself, for Onesimus and for God—that he beseeches Philemon to restore the slave to his household. He was as much concerned that Philemon might profit from the transaction as that Onesimus might be reinstated.

"There is a large lesson here for all human relationship. Fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, friends and companions, teachers and guides of all sorts, should set their conduct by this pattern, and let the law of love sit ever upon their lips. Authority is the weapon of a weak man, who is doubtful of his own power to get himself obeyed, or of a selfish one, who seeks for mechanical submission rather than for the fealty of willing hearts. Love is the weapon of a strong man who can cast aside the trappings of superiority, and is never loftier than when he descends, nor more absolute than when he abjures authority, and appeals with love to love. Men are not to be dragooned into goodness. If mere outward acts are sought, it may be enough to impose another's will in orders as curt as a soldier's word of command; but if the joyful inclination of the heart to the good deed is to be secured, that can only be done when law melts into love, and is thereby transformed to a more imperative obligation, written not on tables of stone, but on fleshly tables of the heart" (The Expositor's Bible).

Paul had found such sterling worth in the new Onesimus that the apostle would gladly have retained him that he might, in Philemon's stead, have ministered unto him "in the bonds of the gospel," but not knowing Philemon's mind in the matter, he sent him back. Note the play of words in "Onesimus [the name means Profitable] who once was unprofitable to thee, but now is truly profitable to thee and to me."

To ask a slave-owner of his own good will and free forgiveness to receive back a runaway slave, who probably had robbed him as he fled, was to make a trying request. But Paul expects Philemon, the Christian and the good steward even of his slaves, to receive Onesimus, not as a servant, but as "a brother beloved," and to do it, not under compulsion or restraint, not by any orders of Paul, but willingly, spontaneously, for love's sake.

Stewardship is never a forced obligation, but a joyous, voluntary fellowship with God in the ministration of one's possessions.

For perhaps he was therefore parted from thee for a season—Paul thus intimates that there was a divine providence in Onesimus' flight—that he might be sent back so that Philemon might receive him not as a slave, but in the eternal relationship of a brother beloved. Though literally and legally still a slave, Onesimus would no longer be as a slave. His relationship would not be altered, he would still stand in subordinate relationship to Philemon; but the spirit of brotherliness, mutual concern and genuine affection would mark their relationship.

To insure that Philemon shall not fail to understand that Paul is wholly concerned for Philemon's interest, Paul asks Philemon to count him his partner and to receive Onesimus as himself. "After calling the slave his

brother, his son, his heart, what can this apostolic soul do further but call him his other self?"

"It is the proudest privilege as well as the most sacred duty of every man and woman to strengthen and enrich life and to increase wealth by investing them in the lives of other men and women. Only in this way does life gain breadth and beauty. Only so is it a joy and success" (Eugene Thwing).

If Onesimus had wronged him at all, or owed him anything (hence the supposition that the slave may have stolen from him on departing), Paul bids Philemon "put that on his account." "The Greek word is rare. It is only used twice in the New Testament, once here, and again in Romans 5.13 of the imputation of sin. Considering the rareness of the word and the peculiar application of it, can the apostle be pointing to an imitation of the great 'imputation'? If he took our infirmities and bore our diseases, the apostle in like manner puts himself for Onesimus and pledges himself for his debt" (Bible Commentary).

"Onesimus had a stewardship as a servant as well as had Philemon as a master. He had no right to that which belonged to his master. A true steward will not steal his employer's time by soldiering on the job, nor his money by padding his expense account. He will render faithful service as one whose master is Christ. Onesimus rendered altogether different service after he became a Christian and thought of Philemon as a dear brother. If men would regard their employers in that light, the world's production would be doubled or tripled so that many now in need would be given comfort and satisfaction, and a new and wonderful relationship between employer and employed would result. And even though some employers are not thought to be worthy of faithful service because of their hardness and greed, nevertheless, as long as a man works for another, he on his part should be brotherly and faithful, and such an attitude in the long run will most certainly have its effect" (Stewardship Department of the Presbyterian Church).

I, Paul, write it with mine own hand, I will repay it—thus Paul solemnly promises to make good what ill Onesimus had done. And I do not remind you that you owe me your very self—your life in Christ. Yes, brother, let me rejoice in the Lord because of thee, refresh my heart in Christ. I write this to you because I have faith in you and know that you will do even more than I have requested.

A sure way to bring out the best in another is to expect the best from him. One with a "Well, I suppose I can't expect anything from you" attitude toward another will never arouse in that one a desire to do better. Meet others with confidence and trust, and they will endeavor to show you that you are not mistaken in your estimate of them. George Eliot says somewhere that we hold half our virtues through the faith which others have in us.

IV. Plans for the Future, verse 27. Paul has hopes of being set free and of visiting Philemon.

V. Greetings from Friends, verses 23, 24.

VI. Farewell Benediction, verse 25.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

My child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, verse 10. If one teaches the son of his neighbor the law, so the Mishna declared, the Scripture reckons this the same as though he had begotten him.

For perhaps he was therefore parted from thee for a season, that thou shouldest have him for ever, verse 15. According to Hebrew law, a slave who had escaped was not to be delivered up again to his master. Paul cannot, of course, be accused of having broken this law in the case of Onesimus, since the latter returned voluntarily: but it is, however, possible that when Paul wrote the words of verse 15 he had in mind the law of the slave's

voluntary return to his master in order to remain his "bondman for ever" (Dt. 15.16, 17), and thought of how that law had been "fulfilled" by the teaching of Christ (Mt. 5.17).—Expositor's Greek Testament.

A bondservant, verse 16 (margin of Revised Version). It is difficult for us to realize how prominent a feature slavery was in the first century in the Roman Empire. Apparently, slaves outnumbered freemen by four to one. In some households there were as many as four thousand slaves. A proposal was made that all slaves must wear a distinctive dress, but this was promptly abandoned through the fear that the slaves might realize their power when their vast number was so clearly indicated. A slave-owner had complete authority over a slave, who was only a "living chattel." By degrees laws forbidding sheer inhumanity to slaves were introduced, but as late as 300 A.D. a synod agreed that it might be legitimate for a Christian mistress to whip a slave-maid to death.—R. C. Gillie.

But if he hath wronged thee at all, or oweth thee aught, put that to mine account, verse 18. According to rabbinical teaching a runaway slave who is recaptured must make good the time of his absence; if this is traditional and ancient law, which is very probable, it throws an interesting side-light upon our Epistle; in the first place, it may, in part, have been the reason for Paul's insistence on the return of Onesimus to his master; and in the second place, it may have some bearing on the words in verses 18, 19. The last words are perhaps meant literally, the reference being to manual labor, or the like, which Paul was prepared to undertake in order to make up for the time lost by Onesimus, this lost time having presumably occasioned loss to Philemon.—Expositor's Greek Testament.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Paul's letter to Philemon was written from prison, therefore either from Cæsarea or from Rome, between 58 and 63 A.D., and scholars are practically agreed that it was written from Rome. Philemon lived at Colossæ (Col. 4.9, 17), which was situated in the beautiful valley of the Lycus River, a tributary of the Mæander, in Phrygia, a district of the Roman province of Asia. To the church there Paul wrote one of his letters.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

When I was a boy my father sent me to Phillips Andover Academy for some final preparations for college entrance examinations. On the first day I was introduced to Professor Comstock, at that time a leading Latin teacher. To my vast amazement Professor Comstock took off his hat and bowed to me as we met. I fear I was so overwhelmed that I forgot to take off my hat in return. I could not see why a distinguished professor was lifting his hat to a seventeen-year-old youth of whom he had never heard. The reason, as I came to know, was that the professor, after years of service, had learned to approach all his students with fundamental respect, and to deal with them on the basis of that respect. Paul speaks of his followers in terms of affection. The affection was all the more significant because it was founded upon respect. —Francis J. McConnell.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

CHRIST TRANSFORMING SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Beginning the Lesson. This letter deals with a personal matter in which Philemon and his family alone are interested, although in the address the church in Philemon's house is included. As Dr. J. D. Jones reminds us, "Some pedantic critics have objected to the inclusion of this letter in the New Testament on the ground that its subject is so trivial. They forget that a thing ceases to be trivial if it is discussed in the light of great principles. A drop of dew is a tiny thing, but the whole blue canopy of heaven can be mirrored in it. In exactly the same way in this brief letter which Philemon sent to his friend to appeal on behalf of his runaway slave, all the love of the Christian gospel and the spirit of Christ are concentrated and expressed."

"Nowhere," as Lightfoot observes, "is the social influence of the gospel more strikingly exerted, nowhere does the nobility of the apostle's character receive

a more vivid illustration than in this pleading on behalf of a runaway slave."

The Effect of Paul's Letter upon the Relationship of Master and Slave. Slavery was an institution deeply rooted in the social fabric of Paul's day. "The effect upon the slaves themselves is written upon a hundred pages of classical literature, frequently with a cynical unconsciousness. There we read of the meanness, the flattery, the cowardice, the suppressed hatred, the impatient bursts of fury, the dexterity in gratifying odious desires, the despair which catches at every villainy and every sensuality as a golden opportunity of enjoyment upon a rapid journey to the inevitable cross. The reflex action upon the master and their families was immense. The laziness, the lying, the sulkiness, the thievish propensities of the majority of slaves was a perpetual and fruitful source of cruel harshness and bitter reprisal."

Paul does not ask Philemon to give the slave Onesimus his freedom. He does not attack the slavery system. He does not charge Philemon with wrongdoing. He could have arraigned slavery as illogical and indefensible from the standpoint of the natural unity and equality of men and the evident social ills it carried in its train. But Paul does not deal with the system of slavery at all in this letter. It was not necessary. Philemon will feel Christianity's condemnation of slavery by the attitude of mind and heart which it will create as it teaches him that in Christ all men are brothers and that through Christ life becomes a great partnership.

How the Gospel Doomed Slavery. When the gospel taught that God had made all men and women upon earth one family; that all alike were his sons and his daughters; that, whatever conventional distinctions human society might set up, the supreme King of Heaven refused to acknowledge any; that the slave, notwithstanding his slavery, was Christ's freedman, and the free, notwithstanding his liberty, was Christ's slave; when the Church carried out this principle by admitting the slave to her highest privileges, inviting him to kneel side by side with his master at the same holy table; when, in short, the apostolic precept that in Christ Jesus is neither bond nor free, was not only recognized, but acted upon, then slavery was doomed.—Lightfoot.

The Person Is Central in Christianity. Christianity has achieved all transformations of social relations not by arguing the logical rightness or value of the change but by accentuating the worth and importance of personality. This was Christ's constant standard of measure. "How much more is a man worth than a sheep!" "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath." Christianity will demand that slavery face the test of its effect on personality. And that test will bring the institution down in ruin.

All institutions, all human relations, all business methods, all laws and programs should be brought up to this test, "What does it do to personality?" Does it cripple it? Does it enrich it?

All racial behavior must also meet this test. Our play life, our social program, our money management, all must stand or fall as they exalt the individual, enhance his dignity and equip him for his highest effectiveness.

Christianity and the Social Gospel. We who know personal religion by experience know that there is nothing on earth to compare with the moral force exerted by it. It has demonstrated its social efficiency in our own lives. It was personal religion which first set us our tasks of service in youth, and which now holds us to them when our body droops and our spirit lags. Religion can turn diffident, humble men like Shaftesbury into invincible champions of the poor. All social movements would gain immensely in enthusiasm, persuasiveness, and wisdom, if the hearts of their advocates were cleansed and warmed by religious faith. Even those who know religious power only by observation of others will concede that.

The personal religion created by social Christianity will stand one practical test of true religion which exceeds in value most of the proofs offered by theology; it creates a larger life and the power of growth. Dead religion narrows our freedom, contracts our horizon, limits our sympathies, and dwarfs our stature. Live religion brings a sense of emancipation, the exhilaration of spiritual health, a tenderer affection for all living things, widening thoughts and aims, and a sure conviction of the reality and righteousness of God. Devotion to the reign of God on earth will do that for a man, and

will do it continuously. A self-centered religion reaches the dead line soon. Men get to know the whole scheme of salvation, and henceforth they march up the hill only to march down again. On the contrary, when a man's prime object is not his soul, but the Kingdom of God, he has set his hands to a task that will never end and will always expand. It will make ever larger demands on his intellect, his sympathy, and his practical efficiency. It will work him to the last ounce of his strength. But it will keep him growing.—Walter Rauschenbusch, in Christianizing the Social Order.

Not Equality, but Fraternity. Jesus does not present himself as a rectifier of life's unequal conditions of outward fortune. He distinctly refuses this office. "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" Jesus does not preach an equality which is synonymous with life on a dead level. He does not preach equality at all. He preaches fraternity. And fraternity implies differences,—older and younger, stronger and weaker, higher and lower. The elder brother is the heir; all that the father has is his; but his sin lies in holding fast to his inheritance selfishly, in shutting out his younger brother, in forgetting and denying that he is a brother at all. The distinctions of life are not meant to obscure, but to reveal and to beautify its best virtues. Out of dependence spring the sweet blossoms of gratitude and loyalty. Out of mastership flow the refreshing streams of forbearance and justice and mercy. —Henry van Dyke, in The Gospel for An Age of Doubt.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. Old age. "Paul the aged: how old was he? Probably somewhere about sixty—not a very great age, but life was somewhat shorter then than now, and Paul was, no doubt, aged by work, by worry, and by his unresting spirit. But Paul the aged was full of interest in the things of the day, no more 'praiser of time gone by,' but a strenuous worker, cherishing a quick sympathy and eager interest which kept him young in spirit to the end. Over his cheery, sympathetic, busy old age there is thrown the light of a great hope that parts him by a whole universe from the old whose future is dark and past dreary, whose hope is a phantom, and memory a pang" (Alexander Maclaren).

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What are some of the things which Paul had to endure while fighting his good fight? 2. What does Paul mean by "the crown of righteousness"? 3. What do you think of Paul's attitude toward Alexander the coppersmith? 4. How do you think the Lord "stood by" Paul? 5. If you had your life to live over again, would you live it differently? 6. How zealously is Paul's work being carried on today?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

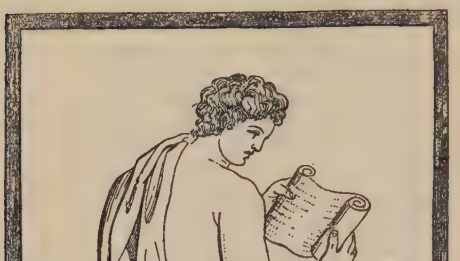
A SLAVE MADE A BROTHER

Beginning the Lesson. What a surprise Philemon must have had when he saw Onesimus standing at his door bearing a letter from his beloved friend Paul! In what relationship had Onesimus stood to Philemon? What had Onesimus learned at Rome? Now he was back. Runaway slaves did not usually come back, for they knew that in accordance with the law they might be put to death. Philemon must have listened in amazement to the story of his slave's conversion and of his wish as a Christian to prove by his service to Philemon that his name, Onesimus, "Profitable," now truly represented him.

But we can imagine that, much as Philemon was surprised by the return of Onesimus still more was he surprised when he read this beautiful letter of Paul's. He had never before realized the significance of slavery. For the first time he was made to realize what bearing Christ's ideal of the work of the individual had to those whom he had called his slaves. In his letter, what terms did Paul apply to Onesimus? He called him "my child," "my very heart," "a brother beloved."

Here is Paul expecting Philemon to take back his slave with joyous readiness, and treat him with the affection and concern of a brother. Slave-holding Romans were not accustomed to think of their slaves as "sons" and "brothers." With his acceptance of the system of slavery, probably believing that the safety of the Empire depended upon keeping that system intact and in seeing that an infraction of the rules be met with quick and adequate punishment, would Philemon be disposed to accept Paul's ideas about Onesimus? Do you suppose Philemon failed Paul? Was his old attitude toward slavery so

strong that this courteous, tactful, affectionate appeal of Paul's did not move him? It must have been a tremendous jolt to all of Philemon's thinking, but it is difficult to think that Philemon failed Paul. It was "for love's sake"—not merely Philemon's love for Paul nor Paul's love for him, but the love which unites Christians with one another and with Christ. And that love must have triumphed.



Reading a Letter

Finding a Brother in Every Man. Suppose the gypsies had stolen your brother when he was a baby and you had gone everywhere looking for him hoping always to find him, what would you be concerned about if you should suddenly come upon him?

Would you mind what kind of clothes he might be wearing? It might be he would be dressed in the fantastic garb of a Romany man, or maybe in rags. Would you count the outward dress important?

Would you be concerned about the language he used? He might have learned only the language of his captors—an alien speech—never having been taught his native tongue. Would his differing speech make him less your brother?

Would you be anxious about the manner of his behavior primarily? He might have the carriage and habits of the tribe. He might be wholly unacquainted with the ways of your home. Yet he would still be your brother.

Is there not in every man, that something which makes him our brother no matter what his color or speech or manner of life? It is this something that Paul asked Philemon to see. It is something that could be seen only "in the Lord." What did that expression mean?

Christian Brotherhood. True, there is no gulf between Christian people nowadays like that which, in the old times, parted owner and slave; but, as society becomes more and more differentiated, as the diversities of wealth become more extreme in our commercial communities, as education comes to make the educated man's whole way of looking at life differ more and more from that of the less cultured classes, the injunction implied in our text encounters enemies quite as formidable as slavery ever was. The highly educated man is apt to be very oblivious of the brotherhood of the ignorant Christian and he, on his part, finds the recognition just as hard. The rich mill-owner has not much sympathy with the poor brother who works at his spinning jennies. It is often difficult for the Christian mistress to remember that her cook is her sister in Christ. There is quite as much sin against fraternity on the side of the poor Christians who are servants and illiterate, as on the side of the rich who are masters or cultured. But the principle that Christian brotherhood is to reach across the wall of class distinctions is as binding today as it was on these two good people, Philemon the master and Onesimus the slave.—The Expositor's Bible.

Sentence Sermons. No longer do I call you servants, but I have called you friends.—Jesus.

Religion may be tested by various virtues, but it may be safely said that its surest proof is kindness.—Maclaren.

Always follow after that which is good, one toward another.—Paul.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up and Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who was Timothy? 2. How did Paul regard Timothy? 3. What did Paul mean in saying "the time of my departure is at hand"? 4. What did Paul mean by his words of verse 7? 5. How did Mark once arouse Paul's displeasure, and what trouble did this make?

LESSON X—DECEMBER 6

ROME AND BEYOND

GOLDEN TEXT: I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. 2 Timothy 4.7

LESSON Romans 15.22-29; 2 Timothy 4.6-18; Titus 1.5-16; 3.11-14
DEVOTIONAL READING Philippians 3.7-14

2 TIMOTHY 4.6 For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: 8 henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.

9 Give diligence to come shortly unto me: 10 for Demas forsook me, having loved this present world, and went to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is useful to me for ministering. 12 But Tychicus I sent to Ephesus. 13 The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, bring when thou comest, and the books, especially the parchments. 14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord will render to him according to his works: 15 of whom do thou also beware; for he greatly withstood our words. 16 At my first defence no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their account. 17 But the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me; that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. 18 The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom "be" the glory for ever and ever, Amen.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The End Crowns the Work, verses 6-8. The end is at hand, and calmly and deliberately Paul faces his end. "I am already being offered," he writes to Timothy. The margin of the Revised Version gives a closer translation of the Greek, "I am poured out as a drink offering." Paul's life is a libation: now the last drops are being poured out upon the altar of his uttermost devotion. "No doubt the special reason for the selection of this figure here is Paul's anticipation of a violent death. The shedding of his blood was to be an offering poured out like some costly wine upon the altar. But the power of the figure reaches far beyond that special application of it." "And the time of my departure is come." The word translated departure is literally unloosing, unmooring. Like a fully outfitted ship at its dock the apostle sees himself tugging at his moorings. He thinks of himself as about to weigh anchor and set out to sea on his last and greatest adventure.

> "For the Christian, the last experience is not that of a dismasted vessel, just making the harbor; but of a bark, with all sails set, fretting at the anchor, and waiting to be set free. Surely this was Tennyson's thought when he gave us his well-known sonnet on Crossing the Bar. 'Let there be no moaning at the bar, when I put out to sea'" (F. B. Meyer).

Then with exceeding great joy the apostle exclaimed as he reviewed his own life, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith." "Here is the old warrior laying aside his weapons, putting off his armor, going to his reward." "I have contested earnestly in the good contest"—for it is the athlete that the apostle has in mind; like a runner in the games "I have finished the course" ("course" here means an appointed track; I have completed the God-assigned stretch: see 1 Cor. 9.24; Acts 20.24); as contestants keep the rules of the game so I have kept the rules of life's course, I have trusted in God, "I have kept the faith."

> "Everybody is fighting, some for wealth, some for place and power. Many a pitiful contest is being waged in this world. Here is the one noble conflict in which the honest warrior will ultimately triumph and in which completest satisfaction will be his."

I have finished the course: what is the course?

"Let me give another word. What is a racer? Not a man who runs any way, but a man who runs over a marked-out track. And Paul says, 'I have kept the track.' He found the track. He followed the light. And when you and I come to be where Paul was when this letter was written, there will be only one question that will be worth asking, 'Have I kept the track? Have I followed God's light for me?'" (Charles Brown).

"Is Paul rejoicing that he has been true to a certain scheme of doctrine, or that he has preserved a certain temper of soul and spiritual relationship to God?" Phillips Brooks questions. "There can be no doubt, I think, but that he means both: for the true 'faith' is a very large one."

A rich light falls across this word of Paul's if we understand that what he kept was not a creed nor his own faith in the Son of God. But rather the faith which the Son of God had put in him, believing in him, entrusting to him his gospel, giving to his charge Christ's love for mankind. It is as if Christ had said: "Paul, I'm counting on you. I'm committing the whole outcome of my cross to your fidelity. I'm expecting you to carry on to the end. Do not disappoint my faith in you."

Perhaps this is Paul's joy. He has not failed Christ's faith in him. His Lord's belief in him has been justified. "I have kept the faith" which Christ reposed in me.

"Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day." Now Paul visions the future and exults in the coming triumph when the Lord shall award him a crown of righteousness. In the old Grecian games a crown or garland was bestowed upon the successful competitor. The aged apostle sees God as the impartial Umpire prepared to award him the crown of righteousness. "It is called a crown of righteousness, because it will be a recompense of our services which God is not unrighteous to forget; and because our holiness and righteousness will then be perfected, and that will be our crown" (quoted by Dr. Erdman).

"And not to me only," Paul added, "but also to all them that have loved his appearing."

"The tissues of the life to be
We weave with colors all our own,
And in the field of destiny
We reap as we have sown" (Whittier).

II. Paul's Loneliness and Need, verses 9-13. If tradition can be trusted, Paul penned this letter from the Tullianum, the dank, lower dungeon of the Mamertine Prison at Rome. His circle of devoted friends had scattered, and Paul had always been dependent upon his friends, for he was a man of deep affection. Demas had deserted him and gone to Thessalonica, "having loved this present world."

"I think I can hear Demas—for I know his temptation—saying: I love this man Paul; his dream is a great one; but I am not sure of it; all this talk about an epiphany of glory presently, about Jesus coming again to establish a kingdom, is, at best, uncertain. But look at Rome: I am sure of this; it is here close about me. Thus he weighed the present against the future; the seen as against the unseen; the thing he could touch as against that which was intangible; the sensual—and I use the word in the sense of that which appeals to eye and ear and taste and smell and touch—as against the spiritual, which can only be apprehended by faith. My brother, you know Demas. He lives with you. You are Demas! The present is a force alluring every man of us" (G. Campbell Morgan).

Crescens had gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia, and Tychicus Paul had sent on a mission to Ephesus. Only Luke was with Paul. "It might be difficult to determine whether this phrase depicts more vividly the loneliness of Paul or the heroism of Luke. The apostle did have other friends in Rome whom later he mentions; but no one else was willing to share the rigor and peril of his imprisonment. However, there was no one whom Paul would have preferred to Luke. Probably no lovelier character lived in those days of early Christianity than this 'beloved physician' whose Gospel is regarded as

'the most beautiful book in the world,' whose Book of The Acts constitutes the most fascinating and important section of Church history, whose care for the great apostle seems to have made possible the continuance of Paul's incomparable work as they shared the perils of travel, the gloom of dungeons, and the glory of composing masterpieces of literary art. In this last scene of Paul's life nothing could be more fitting than this sketch of Luke, amid the deepening shadows, standing steadfast by his side" (C. R. Erdman).

The apostle sorely needed Timothy's presence, and he besought him to make haste to come to him and to bring Mark with him, for Mark is useful to him "for ministering." "This name has become an inspiration to those of us who have known the bitterness of failure in the service of Christ. Here is a man whose early life had been marred by a grievous fault, whose companionship Paul consequently had spurned as that of a coward and a deserter, but a man who had so redeemed his reputation and so convinced the apostle of his sincerity, his devotion, and his worth, that he is now summoned to aid Paul in an hour of supreme danger, and in circumstances from which other friends were ready to flee" (C. R. Erdman).

"Failure in the past is no doom for any man. It is only a challenge to find the truer self that has not yet been quite discovered" (John Kelman).

Not only was Paul lonely, and apprehensive of the outcome of his trial, but he was suffering from the cold dampness of his dungeon, and he asked Timothy to bring him his heavy cloak that he had left with Carpus at Troas. And he was eager to continue his work, and requested Timothy to bring also his papyrus books and leather parchments.

He is never alone who has the companionship of good books.

III. A Warning against Alexander the Coppersmith, verses 14, 15. Possibly this is the coppersmith Alexander of Acts 19.33 and 1 Tim. 1.20. In some way—how, we are not told—he had done Paul great harm, and in the heat of his feeling the apostle quotes Psalm 62.12: "the Lord will render to him according to his works," and warns Timothy against him. Was Paul free from all spirit of revenge here? Or is he merely stating his firm belief in God as One who metes out punishments as well as rewards?

IV. Paul's Triumphant Faith in God, verses 16-18. Though all forsook Paul at his first defense ("may it not be charged against them," he adds), the Lord was with him and so strengthened him that he was able to bear witness to his Lord so that all the Gentiles might hear, and he was "delivered out of the lion's mouth,"—a quotation from Ps. 22.21. "It is a plausible conjecture of Conybeare and Howson that the first hearing, on which he was acquitted and 'delivered out of the lion's mouth,' was on the charge of complicity and sympathy with the incendiaries who had burned Rome in 64; and that charge was triumphantly disproved. The second and fatal charge, heard later [see The Historical Background], was doubtless that of treason, shown by hostility to the established customs of society and by weakening the Imperial authority" (William E. Ramsay).

"The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom; to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen," triumphantly Paul wrote. He is not creeping into port, a wreck with broken masts and rudder gone, but full sail still, and strong for other voyages in other seas, as Phillips Brooks beautifully expresses our thought.

"Behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow,
Keeping watch above his own" (Lowell).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

I have finished the course, henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, verses 7, 8. The Greek youth who won the prize in the race at the Olympian games entered his native city on his return through a breach made for him in its walls, which was then closed that no one less worthy should tread in his footsteps. His statue might be erected in the sacred grove of Olympia and poets might sing his praises, but the prize for

which he contended, his dearest possession, was a crown of olive branches. Paul evidently had the Grecian games in mind when he wrote these words.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Fate of Paul. See The Historical Background of Lesson VIII.

The Pastoral Epistles. The two letters to Timothy and the one to Titus are called The Pastoral Epistles, because they are addressed to these two favorite pupils and fellow-workers of Paul in their official capacity as pastors, and give directions for the founding and governing of churches and the treatment of members.

Peter and Paul Receiving Crowns
A Drawing Found on the Bottom of an Ancient Cup

Paul's Regard for Timothy. Timothy joined Paul on his Second Missionary Journey. He was in charge of the church at Ephesus when Paul during his final imprisonment at Rome on the eve of his martyrdom wrote this second letter. Bengel calls it "The last will and testament of Paul and his swan song."

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Are you imitators of Paul in this, that to your listeners you speak of your own Christian experiences? No other words could have greater weight with your class. Your Christian faith and your Christian hopes—your firm confidence in the power of the gospel—your belief in the message which you bring to your pupils week after week—do they realize it all?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

UNTO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

Beginning the Lesson. Paul had not been successful as the world counts success. He had suffered the loss of all things, had been through trials and persecutions manifold, had been worried and tormented by his own people, hunted and despised and beaten and imprisoned by his enemies, and now the headman's ax awaited him. He did not claim that he had won a great victory, only that he had fought a good fight. He had finished his course.

The mightiest missionary of the cross, the greatest theologian of the Church, had done his work well, and he had the satisfaction that Stanley on his return from one of his African expeditions thus expressed: "No honor or reward, however great, can be equal to that subtle satisfaction that a man feels when he can point to his own work and say, 'See now, the task I promised you to perform with all loyalty and honesty, with might and main, to the uttermost of my ability, and God willing, is today finished. Say, is it well and truly done?' and when the employer shall confess that 'It is well and truly done,' can there be any recompense higher than that to one's inward self?"

The Message of Paul's Triumphant Words. To the eye of imagination Paul's prison is crowded with a throng of saints and heroes and sufferers of all the ages down to the present day. The number is almost countless of those who know what it is to suffer imprisonment, or to be racked with pain, or to be discouraged and lonely and shadowed by the approach of death; but their faces grow bright with cheer and their hearts bound with new hope and their fears are dissolved as they hear the apostle speaking, not to Luke alone (to whom he probably dictated this letter) but to all who are in distress and who in the darkness put their trust in Christ; and the gloom disappears and the scene is flooded with glory as Paul utters his triumphant words: "I know him whom I have believed. . . . I have fought the good faith, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to me at that day. . . . The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and

will save me unto his heavenly kingdom."—Charles R. Erdman, in The Pastoral Epistles of Paul.

Unto the Ends of the Earth. Rome, at first inclined to regard the Christians as harmless fanatics, soon changed her attitude, and despite their loyalty and exemplary conduct treated them with suspicion and dislike. As the new cult grew and spread rapidly the rulers became alarmed lest it should weaken the imperial grasp upon great provinces. Prohibition of the faith and persecution of those who embraced it set in and became more and more severe. So unpopular were Christians that for centuries parts of Rome were undermined to form catacombs, where Christians held their meetings in days of persecution, and where the bodies of the dead were laid away. Hundreds of thousands of martyrs sealed their testimony with their blood, among the earliest and most noted of whom were Paul, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Justin Martyr.

From Ephesus the work extended through Asia Minor, and the Seven Churches mentioned in the Apocalypse were established and became self-supporting and self-propagating.

In Egypt and North Africa Christianity became strongly entrenched in such centers as Alexandria and Carthage, and there is a touching story of its introduction into the court of the queen of Abyssinia by two young Tyrian captives, and the beginning therefrom of the Abyssinian Church which even Mohammedanism failed to overcome.

Whatever of truth there may be in the tradition that Thaddeus and Peter became missionaries to Persia, certain it is that at Edessa, the modern Urfa, there was a strong Christian community in the middle of the second century, and that the king, Abgar, himself became a zealous Christian and is claimed by the Armenians as their first leader in the faith. There are notices of churches in Arabia in the early part of the third century. It is authentic history that Pantænus of Alexandria went to India about A.D. 190, in response to messengers sent with an appeal for Christian teachers, and that he found Christians there who possessed a Hebrew Gospel of St. Matthew.

Athens and Corinth early became strong Christian centers in Greece, while Tacitus, the Roman historian, records that multitudes of Christians abode in Rome. From that city they spread northward through Italy into Gaul, where such noted men as Irenæus and Pothinus, friends and disciples of Polycarp, the disciples of John, introduced Christianity among the Franks and founded churches in Lyons, Vienna and Paris. Others crossed the Rhine to the Germanic tribes, and some went even to the British Isles.

Clement and Irenæus, in the first and second centuries, respectively, speak of the evangelization of Spain. In the middle of the third century Cyprian of North Africa addressed a letter to a church in Spain, and so great was the advance there that a gathering of nineteen bishops in 306 is mentioned.

By the opening of the fourth century Christian missions had so covered the then known world, that when Constantine came to the throne he found Christianity, if not numerically, at least intellectually and morally, so potent a factor that it must be considered and deferred to. It could not be ignored.—Robert H. Glover, in The Progress of World-wide Missions.

The Dream Will Not Die. It took more than a thousand years to displace heathenism in Europe; yet people are sometimes impatient over the slow progress of missions, tempted to give up and let go, because the Kingdom is so slow in coming. As we study the story of the declining centuries of the Roman Empire and the painful emergence of a new order, a new civilization, we ought to take courage and gird ourselves afresh to our great task of taking the gospel to every nation.

"Strive, if ye will, to seal the fountains
That send the Spring through leaf and spray;
Drive back the sun from Eastern mountains,
Then—bid this mightier movement stay."
—Helen Barrett Montgomery in From
Jerusalem to Jerusalem.

Our Faith Tremendous.

What is the final ending?
The issue, can we know?

Will Christ outlive Mohammed?
Will Kali's altars go?
This is our faith tremendous,
Our wild hope, who shall scorn?
That in the name of Jesus
The world shall be reborn.—Vachel Lindsay.

The "New Occasions" of Tennyson, Teaching New Duties, Demanding New Methods of Attack, Are upon Us. "Let us kick God out, comrades! Kick him out! What has he ever done for us? Nothing, I say! Nothing! He has told us that heathenism was bad, has educated us, and then has left us to starve!" The speaker is Thabedi, son of a Wesleyan native clergyman, and he is speaking to a Sunday afternoon crowd of native workmen in South Africa, under the auspices of the communist party.

"I know what I am talking about," he goes on. "My father is a Christian clergyman, and I was educated at a mission school. The missionary sees our misery, but he points to some place beyond the sky and tells us to be content. 'By and by' you will go to heaven if you are 'good boys' and you will be all right. After you die you will have a good time, plenty to eat, fine clothes. But that is not good enough for us, comrades! We want to live today. We want enough to eat right now! Isn't that right?"

"That's right!" comes up from the audience amid applause.

"So I say, 'Kick out the God of the missionary!' Join the communist party, which is out to give us plenty to eat today, and which is out to smash the rich men who are crushing us. Join the party which will bring justice to the workman, the real working man—the black man of South Africa!" Tremendous applause.

Thabedi is attentively listened to as he speaks. His appeal is to the educated native men in the group. Many of the crowd are nominally Christian, members of mission churches. Many have been educated in missionary institutions. Yet they realize much truth in the speaker's remarks. "Yes, that is so. God and the missionary are not doing much for us today. They have left us alone to fight our own battles. Perhaps we had better do as Thabedi says and give this communist party a chance. They claim to be able to do just the things that badly need doing."

The people of the black race are being industrialized over night. The great gold and diamond fields are teeming with workers, drawn from every native home in the land. Here congregate the young men who have been converted by Christian missionaries in their country homes. Here, too, come heathen natives who have never heard the Christian message. Here is heard the din of a three-cornered struggle; the battle between the old heathenism of the black; the new, attractive heathenism of the white; and Christianity with its emphasis upon salvation for the individual. And in the heat of the combat, the latter is undoubtedly losing ground today. The white man's materialism is slowly winning over the black man's heathenism, Christian teaching softening the process but exercising a minority influence in the total movement.

The fact is that the missionaries, as a group, have a gospel which is timid and afraid in the din of industrial conflict. Here questions of wages and housing, of food and clothing, amusement and recreation, are much more vital. And on these questions the bulk of the missionaries are silent. Their gospel has little to say about a fair wage for those who are grossly underpaid, nor about the filthy slums which a recent distinguished visitor from Geneva described as worse than the "hell hole" of Bombay. It is not to be wondered at that thinking native leaders should pause and consider whether this God of the Christians might not better be "kicked out." He's doing nothing for his children. Surely if he loved mankind as the missionary claims he does, he would take a vital interest in all these matters!

Christianity has been described by native discontented ones as a narcotic; misisonaries as those who came to pull the wool over the eyes of the unsuspecting natives, while other whites stole their possessions. "When the white man came to South Africa," it is said, "he had the Bible and we [the natives] had the land. Now we have the Bible and the white man has our land!" While the missionary preached, their land was filched from them by the farmer, miner and sugar cane planter. Today the native people, who number four-fifths of the population of the Union of South Africa, own only one-thirteenth

of the land. The problem of more land for landless natives is our premier problem in this land of racial maladjustments.

We have been blind in not seeing the countless opportunities for applying Christianity to the changing social and economic needs of the people. It is not surprising that such men as Professor Jabavu of the South African Native College, writes in desperation that "professors of Christianity have dismally failed to live up to the standard commanded by their Master." He wants missionaries who are gripped by a vision of a new Christian society, the best trained men and women that western universities can turn out, to come and deal with life on a seven-day basis, to concern themselves with housing and food, coöperative buying and marketing, with conditions of labor and the size of the workers' pay envelope, with the leisure-time activities of old and young, with playgrounds, boy and girl scouts, athletic leagues, community centers, women's clubs, domestic science and child welfare organizations, men's clubs, community bands and choirs. He wants preachers who will preach a gospel which has a place in it for all these things. In short, native South Africans are crying out for Christian leaders to show them through the maze of an entirely new existence in this different world.—Condensed from an Article in The Christian Century, by Ray E. Phillips.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. The satisfaction of a well-spent life.

2. The oft-made statement that the overhead cost of the administration and promotion of missions is excessive; that "it costs a dollar to send a dollar." Get the actual facts from your mission board.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the meaning of the word "Revelation"? Of "Apocalypse"? 2. What is the nature of an apocalypse? 3. Can Revelation be interpreted literally? 4. What was the purpose of the book? 5. What can you learn about the Seven Churches of Asia? 6. Through what experiences has Smyrna passed in recent years? 7. What is the meaning of "in the Spirit," verse 10? 8. Recall some of Jesus' words when symbolically there proceeded out of his mouth a sharp, two-edged sword?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE MISSIONARY WORK GOES ON

Beginning the Lesson.

To start thee on thy outrunning race,
Christ shows the splendor of his face:
What will that face of splendor be
When at the goal he welcomes thee?

Thus Christina Rossetti sings of Paul. To what does she refer in the first two lines of her stanza? Now Paul the aged, as he calls himself in our last lesson, is anticipating the welcome that awaits him at the goal. What does he say about the life he has lived?

It is a beautiful picture which Paul's letter to Timothy gives of this great hero quietly awaiting his end, nobly conscious that his life has been well lived, his work well done, and calmly certain that he shall soon be with Christ, which is far better.

In the great drama, Cardinal Richelieu is asked, "Art thou Richelieu?" and he replies: "Yesterday I was Richelieu; today I am a poor man; tomorrow I know not what." In the great history Paul might have been asked, "Art thou Paul?" and he might have replied: "Yesterday I was Paul the active worker; today I am Paul the aged man awaiting his summons; tomorrow I shall have won my crown."

Tomorrow came. Paul was led by Roman soldiers out through the Ostian gate to the place of his execution. On the way, so tradition says, he saw Plautilla, the daughter of Flavius Sabinus, weeping bitterly, and to her he said, "Plautilla, weep not, and give me a veil, wherewith to blind my eyes, for I am going to see my Lord." She gave him the veil, and the procession moved on. Then it halted. The sword was uplifted and fell. Paul saw his Lord.

The Torch-bearers. At the Greek games, in the long ago, one of the most popular was a relay race with torches. This is how it was run. Men bearing torches stood in a line at the starting point. Each man belonged to a separate team. Away, in the distance, stood another row of men waiting. Each of these

was a comrade of one of those men at the starting point. Farther on still, out of sight, stood another row, and then another and another.

At the word "Go" the men at the starting point leaped forward, their torches burning. They ran at top speed towards the waiting men and then, gasping for breath, each passed the torch to his comrade in the next row. He in turn, seizing the flaming torch, leaped forward and dashed along the course toward the next relay, who again raced on and on till at last one man with his torch burning dashed past the winning post ahead of all the others, amid the applauding cheers of the multitude.

The Greeks, who were very fond of this race, coined a proverbial phrase from it. Translated it runs: "Let the torch-bearers hand on the flame to the others," or, "Let those who have the light pass it on."

The torch-bearers, the long race of those who have borne, and still carry the torches, passing them on from hand to hand, run before us. A little ship puts out from Seleucia, bearing a man who had caught the fire in a blinding blaze of light on the road to Damascus. Paul crosses the sea and then treads his way through the cities of Cyprus and Asia Minor, passes over the blue Ægean to answer the call from Macedonia. We see the light quicken, flicker and glow to a steady blaze in center after center of life, till at last the torch-bearer reaches his goal in Rome.

Centuries pass and men of another age, taking the light that Paul had brought, carry the torch over Apennine and Alp, through dense forest, where wild beasts and wilder savages roam, till they cross the North Sea and the light reaches the fair-headed Angles of Britain, on whose name Augustine had exercised his punning humor when he said, "Not Angles, but Angels." From North and South, through Columba and Aidan, Wilfred of Sussex and Bertha of Kent, the light came to Britain. So—as we look across the ages we

"See the race of hero-spirits
Pass the torch from hand to hand."

In the great relay-race of the world many athletes—men and women—have won great fame by the speed and skill and daring with which they carried forward the torch and, themselves dropping in their tracks, have passed the flame on to the next runner: Paul, Francis, Penn, Livingstone, Mackay, Florence Nightingale, and a host of others.

The greatest of them all, when he came to the very end of his days, as he fell and passed on the torch to others, said, "I have run my course!"

But to us who are coming on as torch-bearers after him he spoke in urgent words—written to the people at Corinth where the Isthmian races were run:

"Do you not know that they which run in a race all run, but one wins the prize? So run, that ye may be victors."—Basil Matthews, in Missionary Heroes.

A Bit of Missionary Work in Which you May Now Engage. The first Sunday in December is known as the Golden Rule Sunday. On this day we are asked to eat a simple meal, one that will remind us of the scanty fare of the orphaned children in the Near East who are wards of America, and the giving of money that these underprivileged children may have food and shelter and education. More than half of the youngsters in the orphanages are still under fourteen, we are told, and they must be sheltered and taught until they can support themselves. Any sum may be sent to the Near East Relief, 151 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

Sentence Sermons.

This is God's just appraisement,—how we make,
Or fail to make, life equal to its chance
Of good; what heaven's heritage we take,
What perfectness achieve, in view of circumstance.—James Buckham.

I charge thee . . . war the good warfare.—Paul.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up and Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What books of the Bible are ascribed to the Apostle John? 2. To whom was Revelation written? 3. What is meant by Asia, as we learned in Acts? 4. Where is Patmos? 5. What have we heard about the church at Ephesus? 6. Where were the other six churches? 7. When Stephen gazed steadfastly into heaven, what did he see? 8. Name some of the occasions during his earthly life when the eyes of Jesus must have been as a flame of fire.

LESSON XI—DECEMBER 13

JOHN'S VISION ON PATMOS

GOLDEN TEXT: Fear not; I am the first, and the last, and the Living one. Revelation 1.17, 18

LESSON Revelation 1.1 to 3.22 DEVOTIONAL READING 1 Corinthians 15.42-49

REVELATION 1.4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne; 5 and from Jesus Christ, "who is" the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; 6 and he made us "to be" a kingdom, "to be" priests unto his God and Father; to him "be" the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen. 7. Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen.

8 I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

9 I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience "which are" in Jesus, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet 11 saying, What thou seest, write in a book and send "it" to the seven churches: unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamum, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. 12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And having turned I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13 and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle. 14 And his head and his hair were white as white wool, "white" as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 15 and his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and his voice as the voice of many waters. 16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. 17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, 18 and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. The Address or Salutation, verses 4-7. With this salutation compare the salutations in Paul's letters, especially 1 Thess. 1.1; 2 Thess. 1.1. John, to the seven churches that are in Asia: this was a common form for the beginning of a letter. As we learned in Paul's history in The Acts, Asia stood, not for the continent of Asia nor for the peninsula of Asia Minor, but for a Roman province in that peninsula. It was to these churches (named in verse 10) that the book of Revelation was primarily written, the churches with which John was personally acquainted, Rev. 22.16. "Seven" is a number representing completeness, and therefore meaning "all."

To the seven churches John invokes grace and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, "probably making use of a solemn and stereotyped phrase to describe the Creator." There is evidently here an allusion to Ex. 3.14, where Jehovah reveals himself as the Great I Am, the Self-existent and Eternal. And from the seven Spirits that are before his throne: again the number seven. It is thought this is a combination of the idea in Ps. 104.4 with the later Jewish idea that the number of the chief angels was seven. And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness. Compare Rev. 1.2 and 3.14; and Jesus' own words, "I bear witness to the truth," Jn. 18.37. Jesus Christ, the first born of the dead (the first of the dead to "enter life": compare Col. 1.18) and the ruler of the kings of the earth (a paraphrase of the language of the Eighty-ninth Psalm).

Unto him that loveth us: "Perhaps John first wrote 'loved' and then bethought him, 'Why should I say "loved" when he loves us still?'" And loosed us from sin by his blood: delivered us from sin by the shedding of his blood on the cross. And he made us to be a kingdom: Christ's followers not only inherit a kingdom, but they are a kingdom, a society under his kingship. To

be priests unto his God and Father: see Ex. 19.6. In former times other men had been priests, or mediators, between God and men; now such are no longer needed, for each one has direct access to God. To him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever: unto the ages of the ages. Compare Rom. 16.27; 2 Tim. 4.18; Heb. 13.21; 1 Pet. 4.11.

Behold he cometh with the clouds: compare Dan. 7.13; Mt. 24.30; 26.64; Mk. 14.62. Every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen. "There will be two kinds of mourning, the one due to the terror of an enemy, the other to the terror of the penitent" (Bengel).

II. The Description of Jehovah, verse 8. I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty—the Supreme Ruler. Alpha and Omega are the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet. It is as if our verse read, "I am the A and the Z," and the expression means, I am the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last, the Eternal One. Compare Rev. 21.6; Isa. 44.6. The same statement is used in verse 17 to describe Christ. "As a whole the phrase, the Alpha and the Omega, exhibits the Divine Life under the categories into which it falls when it becomes the subject of human thought, which can conceive of the Eternal only in the terms of time. Such a title of the Eternal Father stands fittingly among the first words of a book which reveals the present in the light both of the past and of the future" (Henry Barclay Swete).

III. The Vision of the Christ, verses 9-20. I, John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus—banished there because of his faithful proclamation of the word of God and witnessing for Christ.

> "Following the clue thus afforded me, I seek and hope to find patience in this book of awful import. Patience at the least; and along with that grace whatever treasures God may vouchsafe me" (Christina Rossetti, quoted by Scott).

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. John was meditating upon Christ and divine things: his mind was open and receptive for divine messages. This is the first use of "the Lord's Day" for the first day of the week; it was so called in memory of Christ's resurrection. "John was 'in the Spirit,' the life of sense suspended, heaven opened before the eye of faith." And I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet saying [compare Ezek. 3.12], What thou seest, write in a book and send it to the seven churches. For the churches, see The Geographical Background.

The Seven-Branched Candlestick
From the Arch of Titus, Rome

Turning toward the voice that spoke, he saw seven golden candlesticks, which stood for the seven churches to which he was writing. The seven-branched candlestick in the temple suggested the figure. And in the midst of the candlestick was one like unto a son of man: in the Gospels Christ uses this phrase, son of man, eighty-three times for himself. Clothed in a garment down the foot; such was the robe of the priest. The glorified Christ was seen arrayed, not in the short, seamless tunic of a Galilean peasant as in the days of his ministry, but in the long garb of a High Priest, which symbolized to a Jew the highest authority on earth. And girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle; compare Dan. 10.5. The girdle was worn, not about the waist, but about the breast, as the High Priest wore it when on duty: Christ was in active service. And his eyes were as a flame of

fire: compare Dan. 7.9; 10.6. That is, they were absolutely white. White is the symbol of righteousness and wisdom. Christ is only perfect Man. Here we are told of the omnipotence of Christ. "His feet are hard and hot; they trample down all opposition; they scorch and shrivel into nothingness all obstacles and bars." And his voice is the voice of many waters: compare Ezek. 1.26; 43.2. "The world is filled with the reverberations of what he says." He had in his right hand seven stars. The seven stars were the seven churches, and since seven stands for completeness the symbolism means that he holds all the churches of the world in his care. Out of his mouth proceeded a sharp, two-edged sword. His message is two-edged, it acts in every direction, no one may escape from its keenness. And his countenance as the sun shineth in his strength.

"That Figure may awe us, and like the seer on Patmos we may fall at his feet as dead. But the friendly Jesus, who wishes not abject slaves but congenial comrades, has been obliterated. Had we to choose between the Christ on any page of the Gospels and this Figure of John's vision, there can be no question of our choice. It is the Jesus of history, not the Jesus of devout imagination, who holds our heart. But this is not to say that we would lightly part with this picture, provided we use it as a supplement to other New Testament portraits of our Lord. For it is rich in its interpretations of the meaning of Christ to Christians" (Henry Sloane Coffin).

And when I saw him I fell at his feet as one dead. Compare the effect of their visions upon Daniel and Ezekiel: Dan. 8.17; 10.9; Ezek. 1.28. When John was with Christ as he walked and talked in Galilee, he had not been so overpowered by his presence. But John the exile on Patmos, when he beheld Christ in the full splendor of his authority and power, as the ever-living Christ working in history, fell amazed and speechless before him. But Christ did not want him to lie powerless before him. He bade him rise, and inspired him with courage and hope as he said, as he had said to him on the Sea of Galilee, "Fear not." "I am the first and the last," he continued, "and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." By "Hades" is understood the world of the dead, and no distinction is to be made between it and death.

It is because he died that he holds the keys of death. "Can we not understand that?" questions Phillips Brooks. "Do we not know how any soul that has passed through a great experience holds the key of that experience, so that as he sees another coming up to it just as ignorantly and fearfully as he came, he can run up to this newcomer and open the door for him, show him on what side this experience is best entered, lead him through the dark passages of it where he could not easily find the way alone, and at last bring him out into the splendor of the light beyond? And this is just exactly what Jesus does for us by his resurrection. Having the keys of death and hell, he comes to us as we are drawing near this door, and he opens the doors on both sides of it, and lets us look through it, and shows us immortality. Not merely he lives forever, but so shall we. Because he lives, we shall live also."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The Lord's day, verse 10. The reason given by the early Christians for calling the first day of the week "The Lord's Day" was that it was the day of his resurrection. But how it came to be celebrated weekly and not only yearly seems to be first explained by Deissmann. It appears that the first day of each month was called "Emperor's Day" in Asia Minor and in Egypt before the Christian era. We can understand how naturally the term "Lord's Day" arose; for just as the first day of each month, or a certain day of each week, was called "Emperor's Day," so it would be natural for Christians to name the first day of each such, associated as it was with the Lord's resurrection and the custom of the Christians to meet together for worship on it, as "Lord's Day." It may have first arisen in apocalyptic circles when a hostile attitude to the Empire was adopted by Christianity.—The International Critical Commentary.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Authorship of Revelation. That the book is a Christian writing of the first century is accepted by scholars, but they are not agreed as to whether John, its writer, was the apostle John, or John the Seer (so-called). An early tradition gives Ephesus as the scene of the Apostle John's last years of activity, and affirms that he was banished to the Island of Patmos by the Emperor Nero (according to Irenæus, by the Emperor Domitian) and that upon receiving his freedom he returned to Ephesus, where he died. Jerome dates his death sixty-eight years after the death of Christ.

In our text today we read that John was "in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus." He was a partaker with the churches in tribulation. Professor Ramsay believes that the milder forms of exile were reserved for the Roman citizens and persons of rank, and that John's penalty was hard labor of some kind, probably in the mines under the lash of military overseers, preceded by severe beating and accompanied by perpetual fetters, scant clothing and insufficient food, and that he slept on the bare ground or in a dark prison.

The Nature of the Book of Revelation. Revelation is classed as a prophetical book, the only one in the New Testament. In the first verse, John calls it an apocalypse ("Revelation" comes from the Latin translation of this Greek word), but after that he refers to it as a prophecy. It is a prophecy written in the particular literary form known as apocalypse. We must not forget that prophecy in the Bible is not wholly nor mainly prediction, a foretelling of future events. Prophecy tells us what God said to the prophets. Apocalypse tells us what God showed to the prophets. The Book of Revelations is symbolical, and cannot be interpreted literally.

The Book is Symbolic, not Pictorial. In the words of Dr. Charles E. Jefferson: "There are no pictures in it for the eye. We have difficulty in reading the Book, because we stumble constantly. We persist in making the book a book of pictures. But it is not a picture book. It is a book of symbols. Symbols are for the reason, not for the eye. An algebra, for instance, has no pictures in it. Many a pupil has wished it had. It has things in it which look like this: $x+y^2+z^3 = (a+ab+c^2)^5$. This is not for the eye, but for the mathematical understanding. Revelation is a book of symbols presented for the instruction of the spiritual reason."

The Purpose of the Book. It was written to Churches in the western part of Asia Minor which were in grave danger, both from within and without. The worship of the reigning emperor as God was being enforced by the government, and the loyalty of the Christian churches to the one only true God was to be tested by persecution of the fiercest kind. The danger from within came from lukewarmness, factions, false doctrines. John's vision came to him that he might renew their faith, embolden their courage, and thus prepare them for the coming trials.

The Location of Places Mentioned. Patmos is a small rocky island in the Ægean Sea, twenty-four miles from the coast of Asia Minor at Miletus. Pliny states that it was used as a penal settlement by the Romans.

All the seven cities were located in the west central region of the province of Galatia, on the main postal route, "the great circular road that bound together the most populous, wealthy, and influential part of the province." They are named in the order in which they would be reached by the traveler going northward from Ephesus. Recall what was said about Ephesus in connection with our lessons from The Acts.

Smyrna is the only one of the seven cities which now are of importance only for their ruins. It was about fifty miles north of Ephesus and claimed equal commercial importance with Ephesus. Today it is the great commercial city of Asia Minor. Pergamum was the chief seat of worship of Æsculapius. Thyatira was the city noted for its dyeing industry, and was the city whence Lydia, Paul's convert at Philippi, came. Sardis, the residence of Crœsus, was notorious for luxury and licentiousness. Philadelphia was rich and powerful, as was also Laodicea. The latter city was especially renowned for its manufacture of woolen garments.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

With a selection from the Book of Revelation as our text, you may be tempted to spend the entire period in explaining it, and fail to reach the heart of the lesson. There is danger also of bewildering pupils. Be sure your pupils understand that the book is symbolic, and that they understand the symbolism in the description of the Christ of John's vision. Then hasten on to the great message of that vision.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE GLORIFIED SAVIOR

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with Explanations and Comments.

The Portrait of Jesus in Revelation. To hearten his discouraged and imperiled fellow-Christians John paints a portrait of Jesus:—

First, as a majestic Figure, standing in the midst of seven golden candlesticks which represent these persecuted and wavering churches. And in the message of one of these churches Jesus is pictured in a posture which has laid hold on Christian thought with moving power: Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

That is a loved, human glimpse of Jesus on a canvas where for the most part he is obscured for us behind the symbols with which this seer clothes him. And it is a heart-searching glimpse, for we usually think of the words as spoken to those who are not yet followers, whereas John drew this picture of the barred door and the patiently knocking Jesus for the members of a Christian church. They were called his and thought of themselves as his, but he found himself shut out of their lives.

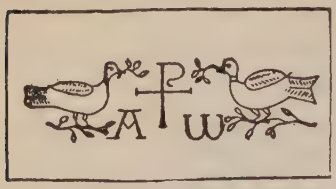
Second, Christ is pictured in heaven, in the presence of the throne of God, surrounded by living creatures and elders (ancient dwellers on high) and an innumerable company of the redeemed. He is described in Old Testament metaphors. He is opening the book of human destiny, and breaking its seals. John by this imagery is trying to make fearful Christians appreciate that the Lord of history is the loving Savior who redeemed them. The future is in his keeping. And John makes them listen to triumphant songs from angels, and from every created thing in the earth, and from a countless throng out of every nation and tribe and people and tongue, ascribing glory to God and the Lamb. But as the drama of history is unfolded in a series of visions, this victory which Jesus is to win follows a hard fought fight. He is pictured as a Warrior, seated upon a white horse, with garments sprinkled with blood and followed by heavenly armies.

It is a strange rôle in which to portray Jesus of Nazareth, with a sharp sword proceeding out of his mouth, ruling the nations with a rod of iron and treading the winepress of the fierce wrath of Almighty God. But if military metaphors are used to depict Christ as a Conqueror, his weapons are utterly unlike those of other victors. His name is the Word of God; the sword which comes out of his mouth is his teaching, and even in his wrath he is the Lamb, whose nature is self-sacrifice. The militarism is sublimated into reason and love; as in Heber's hymn, "The Son of God goes forth to war."

Third, Christ is portrayed in the final scene of human history, when God's holy city descends out of heaven and the nations are gathered into it, as the Bridegroom to whom this commonwealth is wedded, as the Temple filling the whole city with reverence, as the Lamp lighting with glorious beauty every part of its life.

In this portrait the human Jesus is almost completely lost. We are reminded of his ancestry from David, of his birth of the Jewish race, of his crucifixion near a city "which is called spiritually Sodom and Egypt," and of his resurrection. But for the most part he is identified with God. Like God he is Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last. Such has been the impression which Jesus has created in redeeming men from sin that his followers cannot help setting him beside God himself as the Lord of their lives and as the Lord of the universe and of all its history.—Henry Sloane Coffin, in The Portraits of Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

Jesus Christ in the New Testament. The student of church history has many surprises, and one of them is the subordinate position which has been given to Jesus Christ through extended periods of Christian history. Through large parts of the Christian world, during what we call the Middle Ages, the Virgin Mary held the supreme place in the popular mind. Most of the prayers were offered to her. To her went out the richest love of the heart. Jesus was hidden behind his mother, and sometimes lost to view completely amid the vast company of the saints. The story told of an experience in the life of Martin Luther when he was a young man, throws a flood of light upon the mental habits of the early sixteenth century. Luther had been brought up in a pious home. Both of his parents were devout. When young Luther, overtaken by a thunder-storm in a field, saw his companion struck down by lightning, he fell upon his knees crying in consternation: "Help, Saint Anna! I'll be a monk." He did not think of crying to Jesus. He cried to Jesus' grandmother.



Alpha and Omega
From the Roman Catacombs

Even in Protestantism, Jesus has often been permitted to sink into the background, and the Gospels have been denied that supreme place which they claim and hold today. Luther exalted Christ, but it was the Christ he found in the Pauline Epistles rather than the Christ of the Gospels. The English Puritans of the seventeenth century placed the Old Testament on a level with the New, and some of them lived more in the Pentateuch and the Psalter than they did in the Gospels. The heart of John Wesley was kindled in the eighteenth century not by a sentence from the Gospels, but by an idea in a letter of Paul's.—C. E. Jefferson, in Old Truths and New Facts.

The Recent Conception of Jesus Christ. Today the attention of the Christian world is focused on Jesus. Everything connected with his earthly life has become sacred to us. The whole Christian Church is interested in Palestine. Along with the labor of the explorer and artist in Palestine there has gone forward a work of investigation of the words and deeds of Jesus. The Gospels have been made the supreme subject of study. They have been studied as no other books have ever been studied since men learned how to study. Every chapter, every verse, every word, every syllable has been dissected and analyzed, and compared and squeezed that every drop of its meaning might be gotten out. You who are busy in other fields have no conception of the vast and unwearied and painstaking and conscientious and fearless study which has been expended on these writings.

And what is the outcome of it all? An augmented emphasis on the humanity of Jesus. The man Jesus is now vivid to every eye. We know him as he lived and talked and worked in Palestine. We know him better than the men of any preceding generation have ever known him. He stands before us clean-cut, picturesque, fascinating. We see him—the Galilean Teacher. We see him teaching on the side of the hill, on the shore of the sea, in the temple. We see him, the Galilean Healer, the Great Physician, who had wonderful power over the bodies of men. We see him, the lovable and faithful Friend, the Comrade, the Companion, the Man who loved society and found supreme delight in fellowship. We see him, the Hero and Martyr, the Man who was crucified outside the wall of Jerusalem, and who was buried in a rich man's tomb. All this has been made possible by the indefatigable labors of scholars within the last hundred years.—Condensed from Old Truths and New Facts, by Charles E. Jefferson.

The Vision we Need to Get. The emphasis on the physical side of Jesus' life, however, has not been without sundry regrettable consequences. We have studied the Man Jesus so long that we have become somewhat blind to his majesty. Familiarity has not begotten contempt, it could never do that, but it has taken off some of the edge of our reverence. We do not feel the awe which the exile on Patmos felt.

We need to come to this book of Revelation, and study carefully the Jesus

Christ at whose feet the seer on Patmos fell. John looks calmly out upon the world, and in the midst of the welter of confusion and chaos, he sees Jesus walking. He is no longer the meek and quiet Teacher who has instructed peasants by the Sea of Galilee; he is now the august and mighty Son of God. His eyes are flames. His countenance shines, his feet burn. The sword of his authority cuts. He holds safe in his strong right hand all the churches. Ponder this stupendous act of faith. John takes the Jesus of Nazareth and puts him at the center of the stage of the world's history. He lifts him out of Galilee, and makes the entire world his province. He takes a Palestinian Peasant, poor and despised through his life, dying at last on a cross as a condemned criminal, and dares seat him on the throne of the universe. He gives him eyes which see through everything, a sword sharper than the sword of Domitian, and feet able to trample all opposition into the dust. He endows him with the attributes of God.—Charles E. Jefferson.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. The Churches as candlesticks.

2. The portrait of Christ in the Gospels, in Paul's writings, and in Revelation.

Questions for Pupils to Look up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Having written the words of verse 7, why does John add verse 8? 2. What is the argument of verse 17? 3. What does it mean to love one another? (Compare 1 Jn. 3.18.) 4. How may one learn to love one another? 5. What chapter of what letter of Paul's is a Hymn of Love?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

JOHN SEES THE EVER-LIVING CHRIST

Beginning the Lesson. You know Hofmann's picture of Jesus when, as a Boy of twelve, he talked with the learned doctors of the law in the temple at Jerusalem. And you know Hofmann's picture of Jesus as a Man. (Show these pictures in penny reproductions.) There are many other beautiful pictures of our Lord.

We can close our eyes and have a mental picture of Jesus, but the picture we see is like some great artist's picture of him, because we know these pictures so well. Of course you know that there is no real photograph of Jesus, and the pictures of him are only the efforts of artists to portray a man who shall represent the goodness, courage, nobility, gentleness, divineness of our Lord. We study today the apostle John's word picture of Jesus, as John saw him in a vision. Why was John capable of having a true picture of the Christ? Where was he when this wonderful vision came to him?

John had a vision of Christ in heaven. You will not think this strange when you remember how John loved Jesus and longed to see him again. I think he would have seen Jesus anywhere, in quiet home or crowded street, for he was always thinking about him.

He saw Jesus as King. And what a King he was! Robe and belt of gold, face like the sun, eyes like shining brass, voice like the music of the ocean! There were no jewels about him, no armor upon him. There was not even a crown on his head, only a whiteness that spoke of age and wisdom. All his glory came from what he is—his speech, the love that lights his face and sings in his voice. There were no armies by him, only seven golden candlesticks which stand for churches made up of common people. There was no scepter in his hand, only seven stars in his right hand, that stand for seven men who love and serve him. This King rules over those who love and follow him. When you look at a King like that, don't you feel like singing, "Crown him Lord of all"?

Looking into the Face of Christ. When we come to think of the looks of Jesus we begin to realize what an expressive face he must have had. How tender the expression which could entice the children to him and make them feel that he was the children's Friend! What a compassionate and sympathetic look that must have been which could make the common people flock to him! How terrible in its searching gaze it must have appeared to the Scribes and Pharisees as they crept away one by one from his presence under his look of burning indignation! I can quite imagine that many a time it was not necessary for him to speak, for more than words could ever express was to be seen and read in his looks.

If Jesus were really here! we say. If we could really look upon him, how it would help us. We think we should be so eager to know what he thought of our words and doings. We are sure we should find encouragement at times when we sorely need it. It would be so inspiring, we think, to see the smile of approval upon his face. But he is here. It is only the dullness of our eyes which keeps us from seeing him. There he stands, a radiant Figure in the history of every life. Some people see him and some don't. There are some whose hearts are in such sympathy with him and whose spiritual eyesight is so clear that they see him every day. They walk with him and they talk with him; they know when he smiles on them and when he looks with his pained, sorrowful look. These folk find no reward in life so great as Christ's approving smile; and nothing gives them so much unhappiness as to know that they have caused him pain.—Condensed from The Shattered Temple, by John Eames.

The Proof of a Living Christ. The editor of one of our leading religious journals was walking along some cliffs near the sea one Easter morning. In his walk he encountered an old fisherman, and during their conversation together the editor was struck by the simple faith of the old fisherman in his Risen Savior. "How do you know that Christ is risen?" he asked. "Sir," came the reply, "do you see those cottages near the cliffs? Well, sir, sometimes when I'm far out at sea I know that the sun is risen by the light that is reflected from yon cottage windows. How do I know that Christ is risen? Why, sir, do I not see his light reflected from the faces of some of my fellows every day, and do I not feel the light of his glory in my own life? As soon tell me that the sun is not risen when I see his reflected glory, as tell me that my Lord is not risen."—Unknown.

How May Jesus Christ Become and Remain Real to Me? By continuing the study of his life and words and work. Any person to be real to us must be known to us. Is that not true? And am I not right when I say that confidence is a mark of closest friendship? And that confidence is based on knowledge? Chinese Gordon knew Christ very intimately. He gave one an impression that he was living right in the same room with Christ, and was vividly conscious of his presence. During the early portion of his life he gave not only minutes but hours to the study of the Scriptures. If some Christians I know gave no more study or attention to the cultivation of their friendships than they do to the study of Christ and the Scripture, those friends, their characters and movements, would become exceedingly shadowy and would have no influence on their lives.

Then Jesus Christ becomes real and remains real to those who obey him and seek to conform their lives to his example. Without doubt, a dominant desire to live a right life is indispensable to the reality of Christ. One who keeps his heart swept free from envy, jealousy, pride, selfishness, vindictiveness and unkind judgments of others, has Christ with him.

When I am away from home my wife is just as real to me as if she were in the next room, because love bridges the distance. Love for Christ will make him real to you.—Condensed from the Words of John R. Mott.

Sentence Sermons.

Peter, John and Paul
Singing with a smile—
Courage down in Rome,
Courage on an Isle!

So I learned a song
Born of singing men—
Courage is a song,
One may sing again!—Arthur R. Macdougall, Jr.

Jesus Christ is the illumination and the inspiration of existence: without him the world is a puzzle, and death a horror, and eternity a blank.—Phillips Brooks.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What books of the New Testament are ascribed to the Apostle John? 2. What is the great word that occurs so often in our text from John's First Epistle? 3. What does he say about God's supreme Gift? 4. What did Jesus call the great commandment? 5. What commandment did he say was like unto it? 6. What parable did Jesus give that teaches the duty of showing love to one's neighbor? 7. In what words does John teach that one should love others? 8. What shall our class do at Christmas to show our love for others?

LESSON XII—DECEMBER 20

THE SUPREME GIFT OF LOVE (CHRISTMAS LESSON)

GOLDEN TEXT: Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 1 John 4.11

LESSON 1 John 4.7-19 DEVOTIONAL READING John 15.12-17

1 JOHN 4.7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 9 Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son "to be" the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No man hath beheld God at any time: if we love one another, God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us: 13 hereby we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have beheld and bear witness that the Father hath sent the Son "to be" the Saviour of the world. 15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and he in God. 16 And we know and have believed the love which God hath in us. God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him. 17 Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, even so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love: but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath punishment; and he that feareth is not made perfect in love. 19 We love, because he first loved us.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. Love the Proof of Sonship, verses 7, 8. "Beloved," wrote John, the beloved disciple, "let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God." Love is not an attribute of God, but his very Being, and since love proceeds from God, we who are his sons must prove our sonship by our love. "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love." This negative counterpart of verse 7 emphasizes the thought that "Love is the lens through which I discern the secret things of God."

II. The Supreme Gift of God, verses 9, 10. The incarnation is the manifestation of God's love. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life, Jn. 3.16.

> "In the National Gallery can be seen two sorts of people. There are the mere vagrants, who are always 'on the move,' passing from picture to picture, without seeing any. And there are the students, who sit down, contemplate, and meditate, and appropriate, and saturate. And there are vagrants in respect to the love of the Lord. They have a passing glimpse, but the impression is not vital and vitalizing. And there are the students, who are always gazing, and who are continuously crying, 'O the depth and the riches of the love of God in Christ!' " (J. H. Jowett).

III. God's Love the Ground for our Love of Others, verse 11. God's love for us lays upon us the obligation of loving one another, for in this way we show our love for God.

IV. Love the Proof of God's Spirit in us, verses 12-16. God's presence cannot be seen, but it can be appreciated by its results: where love is seen in man, it proves the presence of God's Spirit within him. And God's love is completed in us: his abiding in us is the most complete expression of his love. Through the Spirit which God has given us, we have the consciousness of actual fellowship with God. Furthermore, we have another great proof of his love, which we have beheld and bear witness (we who lived with him on earth have seen him with our eyes and to his life we can testify) in that the Father hath sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. He who confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, lives in true fellowship with God. And we who saw Jesus know the love which God hath for us. God is love and he that

abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him. "There is only one Love, and our love, whatever it may be, is merely an infinitesimal expression of that love."

"If anybody comes to you and asks you to give a definition of what religion is, and what Christianity means to you, you could not give a better definition and explanation than just this [verse 16], 'As for us, we know the love which God has for us, and we confide in it'" (James Reid).

V. Love in Relation to the Day of Judgment, verses 17, 18. We may know that love is made perfect with us, when we can look forward with confidence to the great day of judgment, because as he is even so are we in this world. "This is to be our aim: that the life of Christ in us shall be and do what the life of Christ was and did in himself. We are to so live that our life shall repeat the life of Jesus of Nazareth" (Alexander McKenzie). "Fear springs from the consciousness that punishment is deserved, and from the expectation that it will be inflicted. Love emancipates from fear."

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear. "One result of love made perfect is absence of fear, confidence that both here and hereafter no real evil can overtake us. To be in God, to be as Christ is, must mean safety" (Hugh Black). Because fear hath punishment; and he that feareth is not made perfect in love. To live like Christ is to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven: where is there room for punishment or for the dread of it? The Lord is my Light and my Salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

"A world of chance I dreamed one night,
Where chaos lived without restraint;
The dreadful terror of that sight
No brush of mine can ever paint.

"From dream of night to truth of day,
I woke at last to gladsome awe;
I know as fact, naught can gainsay
That God is love, and love is law" (James I. Vance).

VI. The Warrant for Love, verse 19. We love, because he first loved us. The King James' Version reads, "We love him, because he first loved us." The Revision gives us a still more precious truth—that we love at all is due to the primary activity of a divine love upon us. "All human love is reaction to the stimulus of the divine love. The whole sphere of Christ's affection is the response of that which is divine in us to the evoking love of the Father's heart."

"Sometimes far out at sea the sailor sees the sky grow tremulous and troubled. The cloud seems to be all unable to contain itself; its under-surface wavers and stretches downward toward the ocean. It is as if it yearned and thirsted for the kindred water. A great grasping hand is reached downward and feels after the waves. And then the sailor looks beneath, and lo, the surface of the waves is troubled, too; and out from the water comes first a mere tremble and confusion, and then by and by a column of water builds itself, growing steadier and steadier, until at last it grasps the hand out of the cloud, and one strong pillar reaches from the sea into the heavens, from the heavens to the sea, and the heavens and the sea are one. So you must make man know that God loves him, and then look to see man love God.

"How shall you make man know that God loves him? In every way,—there is no speech nor language in which that voice may not be heard,—but most of all by loving the man with a great love yourself, by a lofty and generous affection of which he shall know that, coming through you, it comes from beyond you, and say, 'It is my Father that my brother utters,' and so be led up to the Father's heart" (Phillips Brooks).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

God is love, verse 8. This is a truth we have always known, but to the world of two thousand years ago it was a new thought. The pagan world had only gods who were envious of men's good fortune. One of the greatest men

said: "It is nonsense to think that the gods love men." Just as unheard of was love for one's neighbor. It is true that the scribes and Romans practiced a certain kind of generosity toward the poor, but not out of pity, rather because "It is beautiful to give since it honors the giver and increases the fame of his name, of his position, of his home, yes, of his city where he dwells."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Nothing is recorded in the New Testament about John's activity as an apostle after Christ's death, save that, as we have seen, he is associated with Peter in the events narrated in the early chapters of the Acts, and is mentioned by Paul as one of the three pillars of the church at the time of the Council in Jerusalem (Gal. 2.9). The three brief letters—First, Second, and Third John—and the Book of Revelation are ascribed to him.

At some time during the first decade of the second century, the Apostle John wrote his First Epistle. He wrote it, it is believed, to the Christians scattered throughout Asia Minor, and especially those at Ephesus. All John's writings were written with a definite purpose. The purpose of this Gospel was to quicken faith, John 20.31. The purpose of his first Epistle was to strengthen faith: These things have I written unto you, that you may know that you have eternal life, 1 John 5.13. Life, Light, Love, are the great words of this letter.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

An adult recently declared that never again would he attend a certain Bible Class, because for the Christmas lesson the story of the shepherds finding the Babe was discussed, verse by verse. Instead of the beautiful but very familiar stories from the Gospels of the birth of Christ, our Lesson Committee has chosen for our Christmas Lesson John's beautiful words about the priority of God and his love, and the evidence of his love in sending his Son into the world that we might live through him. It is happily chosen. Pupils of all ages, whether adults or Intermediates, can be given a new appreciation of Christ as "the Supreme Gift of love," and a new grasp of what Christmas should mean in a way that could not be gained from the Gospel stories.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE GIFT OF THE SAVIOR

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with Explanations and Comments.

Jesus Christ Came to Deliver us from Fear. I used to know certain old men who loved to go to church and hear a strong, uncompromising sermon about hell. They shivered at the grim doctrine and got a certain grim pleasure out of it. But I could never see that by such experiences they were made better men. I did not see the grace of God purging away their selfishness, and making them true and tender. But the men who at last really take it in that God loves them are broken down by the fact. Their whole natures are melted, and out of that experience come new ways of life. When the soil of their natures has really been turned up in that fashion, fresh and beautiful flowers of tenderness and understanding and pity and purity begin to grow in the soil. Yes, fear is really a paralyzing force. It often makes men fierce. It certainly never moves the best parts of us. Rather does perfect love cast out fear. And that surely gets us to the heart of the whole matter. Did not Jesus Christ really come to deliver us from our fears, and substitute for them the irresistible constraints of love?—From a Sermon by A. Herbert Gray.

Love Is back of Calvary. God is love: the man who wrote this sat not at the feet of Buddha or Confucius or Zoroaster, not at the feet of Socrates or Plato or Aristotle, not at the feet of Mohammed, but at the feet of Jesus, and learned the sublimest truth of the world from the lips of him who spake as never man spake. Of course, many of the great religious teachers of the world have taught that God was loving, friendly, merciful, but it remained for Jesus to teach that love is the very essence of Godhood, and for John his disciple to declare that God is love. This is preëminently the Christian conception of God.

And yet it took mankind a long time to make this discovery. Even now there are many who have never seen the look of love in the face of God. They think of him as pitiless necessity or tyrannical force. His voice to them sounds harsh and his hand is hard. The things which hurt them they feel have come from God. Their losses, their sorrows, their hardships they have charged against their Maker, and to tell them that God is love is to utter a platitude without meaning. For ages it was not love, but anger, which men painted with the face of their divinity. They were afraid of God. Worship was an effort to win him over, to buy his friendship, to patch up a truce between a scared race and a being bent on vengeance. Then Jesus came and lifted the veil and scattered the darkness and said, "Look, behold your Father." For God is love.

Love is back of Calvary. Human need is behind that great tragedy also. But if human need had been all, and God had looked on unstirred by pity, there would have been no Calvary. It was because God could not deny himself that Christ suffered on the cross. Love can do no less than its best. It was because God is love that "He gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

To discover that God is love is to be saved. Redemption is not a theological dogma. It is not an ecclesiastical formula. It is the discovery that God is love. It is to fling away your arms because you find you have been fighting your best Friend. It is to have hate melted out of your heart and willfulness and disobedience cleaned from your soul by the warm breath of heaven's love.—James I. Vance, in The Christian Century Pulpit.

Where All the World Meets. The one thing which is evident above all others in the artless Christmas stories of the New Testament, is their unconscious grouping round the cradle of significant and representative figures which, taken together, bring the world to gaze upon the wonder of Christ's coming. Like the symbolic groups round some statue they stand or kneel before him, forming one prophetic picture of his manifold influence upon the world. In the beautiful words rendered familiar by the music of Gounod's "Nazareth," we have the local shepherds, the far-traveled kings, and the wind among the pine trees, excellently telling the same truth, and adding only that sense of nature also finding her interpreter in him, which Milton expressed so nobly in his Hymn on the Nativity.

First there are the parents, linking him in at once with Israel's royalty and peasantry. Joseph the carpenter brings him among the working men and disappears, having rendered this service. The working man shall receive from Jesus abundant repayment for that carpenter's care. Mary brings womanhood to the cradle, as Raphael and Rossetti have so exquisitely understood. Her pure soul has been astonished and grieved with centuries of worship. But one of the main reasons for her worship was that asceticism had taken the love of woman from the conscience of man, and it was by the compulsion of an eternal human need that she came back in this strange fashion. But, while the worship must pass, the gift she brought remains—purity and love are where Jesus is from the beginning.

The Roman Emperor is there, for it was the census that brought the babe to Bethlehem. Drawn, like so many thousands, by that Emperor's will along the roads of Palestine, they little thought how strong a link it was that then was forged. Rome shall reckon with that Babe yet, and the greatness of her Empire shall pass over to his Church.

The angels and the shepherds are intentionally united in one group. Highest heaven and lowliest earth, separated by all the fears and superstitions of the past, are one at last in this welcome. For in him the wistfulness of earth that yearns upward to the mystery of the stars finds at length an answer; and humble men discover unknown friends in heaven.

Anna and Simeon bring their hymns of welcome, and aged arms enfold him in the temple. No Phariseees are there, nor Sadducees—none of the sophisticated lords of religion. But the worship of the world is there. In that temple, and in many another, where the piety of the world came to pray, empty arms had been stretched out towards the unseen God. But in him worship was to find what it had sought, and to understand its own mysteries at last. Men would look upon their children's faces, and touch them reverently, and God

would be sought and found, not in the distant haven, but here in the lives of men upon the earth.

The Magi come from far lands, guided by a star, with precious gifts in their hands. For this is to be no national hero merely, nor local revelation. He is for the world, and the Gentiles shall come to his light. And the wisdom of the world shall come to him also, and find the sciences open for their exploration. Guided by a star, they will travel through astrology to astronomy; through fantasy to knowledge. And while science flourishes in his days, more and more will it return to the cradle again, confession that the highest knowledge is beyond its ken, and seeking that from him.

Lastly, what is this evil face looking over the shoulders of the Magi? Herod, with his cunning eye, and his murderous heart, is there. Without that last figure the group were incomplete. It would tell of a world too fair and too harmonious. But the world we know has sin in it, and the undertone of the shepherds' pipe and the angels' song is a bitter cry that will not be comforted. The Babe has drawn to his cradle not only the worship and the wisdom of the world, but its tragedies of sorrow and of sin. That touch completes the picture, casting among the shadows of the stable the deeper shadow of the cross.

Thus, around the manger of Bethlehem, all the world meets, bringing the manifold interests of humanity to Jesus Christ, that he may interpret and command them.—Condensed from Ephemera Eternitatis, by John Kelman.

"Is God as Good as Jesus Christ?" To my mind the real problem of theology is this, for it is what we really want to know, Is God as good as Jesus Christ? My own chief theological problem is not, Was Christ divine? but, Is God like Jesus? Is he really as good as that? Because if any one could prove to the satisfaction of every sane mind that God is as good as Jesus, then all our intellectual troubles, all our doubts and fears, all our problems, would be solved.

Now, Jesus is the only Person in history who seems divine—that is, who seems to have been in connection with sources of power unfamiliar and unknown to other good men. Compare any other admirable person with him, and his uniqueness stands out even the more plainly. We have actual reverence for the character of Abraham Lincoln, but was there ever a man more wholly human? Leaving out all the personages of what is called profane history, what shall we say of Moses, and David, and Elijah? They were absolutely human. Place together before the eyes of the mind Jesus and Paul. The difference is not in degree, it is in kind. Never was there a character more exclusively human than Paul.

The supremacy of Christmas consists in this—Jesus brought into the world divine intelligence. The apostle John, who knew more real theology than any other writer then or since, said that man hath not seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, he who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. The good news brought to mankind on the first Christmas Day is that the true nature of God is revealed in the character of Jesus Christ. How can we find out God? How can we believe that he is a God of love? We can find him and believe in him only through the Person who is his representative. There is the Light shining in the darkness, and the winds of persecution, hatred, unbelief, materialism, and indifference have never been able to extinguish it.—William Lyon Phelps, in Good Housekeeping.

Give Yourselves in Love. We recommend that this year we all turn over a new leaf and instead of giving meaningless things begin to give ourselves. And what does this mean? That we make a few calls or hold telephone conversations with our friends, exchanging the season's greetings? No, giving ourselves in any vital sense means much more than these mere formalities. We ought to share our personalities in kindly interest and joy-abounding service.

How many men and women there are at this season of the year whose smiling faces hide aching hearts! Here is one who has lost faith in man and God; here is another who has had business reverses and is driven almost to distraction; here is still another who has been left all alone in the world. Let us give them something. Let us give them of our courage, of our optimism, of our faith. Can we not restore them to life? Is there no resurrection for them?

Think of the sick, the victims of tuberculosis, heart disease, and the numerous other ailments that beset mankind. How many invalids, "shut-ins," hopelessly incapacitated individuals there are in the world! How dark is their outlook! What have they to live for? Each of us can become the bearer of some little sunshine to dispel the shadows from their lonely rooms.

Then there are the children and young people—the hope of the race. We must give them something. Give them a fine example, give them inspiration, give them friendship, give them love, give them a memory that shall last all their days of at least one man or woman who was good and true.

See the throngs of so-called "inferior peoples." What shall be our attitude toward them in this time of "peace on earth, good will to men"? Shall we cruelly push them down the steep path that they have been so laboriously climbing through the centuries, and proclaim again the "survival of the fittest" and "Anglo-Saxon supremacy"? O help them! Cheer them on! Tell them that they are sure to win. Give them of yourselves. Share your personality with them, your insight, your love.

Is not this the best Christmas gift? It lasts. Toys are broken within a week after Christmas Day. Neckties and handkerchiefs wear out in a few months. Books perish rapidly. Even jewelry is lost or soon grows "out of date." But when a man or woman in the spirit of helpfulness gives himself with love and sincerity to another, the gift lasts eternally. "I am a part of all that I have met" is no mere poetry, it is a statement of spiritual law. Share your personality, and in the very process of sharing it you will acquire a larger abundance for still greater giving.

Is not this the best gift? It has quality. It is a bringer of peace and joy, of courage and contentment. These things are priceless. Men and women everywhere in their restlessness are hungering for such blessings, which can transform all life from gray to gold and give our daily existence a glorious richness of meaning.

Is not this the best gift? It sets the tune of life to a high key. What is most worth while? Money, social prestige, position? No, the most precious things are faith, hope, love, God, Christ, eternal life. And these gifts we can bestow upon our fellow men as we share with them our very souls.—From an Editorial in Zion's Herald.

A Christmas Quiz. Madam, have your washing done out? Has she any children? Any idea how gifts of old clothes pall? How a sight of something new, and useful, and pretty will make a hard-working woman dance like a child? And cry? Priced any soft, warm blankets lately?

Sir, noticed business improvement? Felt it? Good to see the unemployed getting jobs! Ever been down and about out? In winter? Remember how you felt when you got work? Work, not aid. Remember the excited, bubbling family group? The glow in your heart, how good all men looked, the strong, new courage? Must be nice on Christmas morning to feel one has transformed some despairing life that way!

Madam, tired out? Everything ready for the joyful morning? Everybody "remembered"? Everybody? Rest a bit, and think over the list—you don't want to miss any one, do you? Any one. Sure there isn't some one who may, Christmas morning, turn wearily under the scant covers and chokingly say, "Never mind, dearie, don't cry—" (Think of that; "don't cry" on Christmas morning!) "—don't cry any more; perhaps Santa Claus—" But what can any one say to a child on Christmas morning crying over a thin, empty stocking?

Sir and Madam, merry Christmas to you!—The Circle.

For Bible Class Discussion. 1. What does Christmas stand for with our children?

2. How should Christmas be observed in the Church School?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHY JESUS CAME TO EARTH

Beginning the Lesson. E. C. Urwin, writing in The New Chronicle, has this to say about the great stories of the world:—

The world is full of great stories. The Greeks loved the story of the Trojan

heroes, and of Jason and the Golden Fleece, and the Romans the story of Æneas. Jews rejoiced in the story of Abraham, and of Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt. Hindus tell of their hero god, Krishna, and we remember what a wonderful poem Longfellow made out of the story of the Red Indian hero, Hiawatha. But for Christians, the most wonderful story in all the world is that of God sending his Son to earth as a little child "because he loved us so."

All over the world that story will be told today, and men's hearts will be glad. It will be told on lonely bush farms and sheep ranches in Australia and New Zealand, and on the hills of southwestern China. It will be told in India, and India's sons will forget the love of Krishna in the greater love of Jesus. In Africa, negroes will rejoice at the name of One who came to set them free, and all over Europe and America men and women will remember the story their mothers taught them long ago. And somehow, all the world will grow kinder, tenderer to little children, fonder of home, readier to help in need, and men that have made mistakes will take heart of grace again, believing that the love that sent Jesus into the world nineteen hundred years ago, will stand by them still.

Instead of the beautiful stories about the shepherds and the wise men and the Babe in Bethlehem, which you know so well, we study today a few verses from the First Letter of John, which tells us why Jesus came to earth. There is one word which is repeated many times in these verses, and that word gives us the reason of his coming: what is it? Whose love? What does verse eight say that God is? What does verse nine give as the reason for Christ's coming? And verse ten? And again in verse fourteen, the reason is given: what are the words?

We also Ought to Love One Another. In this fourth chapter John rings the changes on his great theme just as a composer brings out again the motif of his music. God is the Source of love, God is love: this is the great theme. Jesus Christ, God's Son, is the Bearer of that love, it is the love of God that sent the Son to be the Savior of the world: this is the major note. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another: this is the application of the theme for us. The love of God is to operate in all the world and down all the ages through those who love him because he first loved us.

Tradition has a beautiful picture of the apostle John in his last days, when he was too old and frail to preach, being carried daily to the market place of Ephesus, and saying simply to those who gathered to hear his words: "My little children, love one another, for love is of God." When some one ventured to ask why he did not tell them something else, he replied: "Because this is the sum and substance of the gospel; when this is done, all is done."

An American who was watching the British method of training horses for use in the army noticed that at the close of each day's drill there came, folfowing the order to dismount, another order that is without parallel in any other army. It seemed to be a single mysterious word, "Muchyerosses!" Its meaning was made clear, however, when each rider proceeded to stroke, pat or pet his charger, perfunctorily or affectionately, as the case might be. The command meant, "Make much of your horses."

Are we making much of others? Are we slow in letting others know that we love them? If every loving thought we have blossomed into a loving deed, what a different world would this be! We can make ourselves put into words the kind thoughts we have of others; we can make ourselves do the helpful deeds to which our loving thoughts prompt us. Each word spoken and each deed done makes it easier and more natural for other words and deeds to follow. Let us make much of others. Love is shown by service. "Measure your love, not by the way it makes you feel, but by the thing it makes you do."

At Christmas time you think of your friends and send them gifts to show your love. Do you think also of those who are ill whom you could cheer, of those who are needy whom you could help? Sometimes it takes so little to make another happy. Can you not do something for some one whose Christmas will otherwise be lonely or miserable?

In All-the-Year Stories there is a touching story by Florence Hoatson of a little French girl whose parents were very poor. The father was out of work, and there could be no Christmas gifts for Piccola, but she kept saying, "Santa Claus will remember me; he remembers all children on Christmas Day."

On Christmas even Piccola, following the custom of her country, put a shoe on the window-sill for Santa Claus to fill, and the next morning, on awakening, she hurried to the window. It was a wonderful present she found. "But if you tried to guess all day and all night, I am sure you could never do so. For there, tucked away in the shoe, was a tiny bird. It had flown in through the window right into the warm shoe. Poor little shivering bird! Piccola was delighted. 'Santa Claus left it in the shoe for me,' she cried.

"It was a happy Christmas morning for Piccola. She warmed the tiny thing by the fire, and fed it with crumbs and as the bird felt the heat and ate the food it got better. Piccola was delighted. Fancy such a lovely present coming to her in that little shoe! When the bird began to fly about and chirp its thanks, Piccola felt that there was nothing nicer in the whole wide world. Not many little girls would have wakened up that morning to see a bird in their shoe.

"And the little bird stayed with Piccola. It sang to her and chirped from morning until night. Happy little bird! Happy, happy Piccola!"

They Did not Know about God's Great Gift. You know that there are people in other lands who have never heard of the birth of Jesus, but are you not surprised to be told that here in our own land there are boys and girls who have never heard of Christmas and what it means? A writer in The Church School gives the following account:

Into the recesses of the Ozark Mountains, in northwestern Arkansas, one hot day last summer, came a dusty old Ford, carrying a missionary preacher. He had come to see what he could do in this little village. On the first corner he spied a boy—just one of the village youngsters.

"Hey, Freckles!" he shouted. "Where's Skinney and Red?"

"I don't know. Seen 'em round here a while back."

"Well, go and get them. I got something to show you fellows." And, entirely unsurprised, Skinney and Red and Freckles came around and got down on the grass with the stranger while he talked. Quite expectedly, the talking grew into a story.

"But," the man stopped right in an interesting part, "I can't finish this story until I have fifteen boys here."

So Skinney and Red and Freckles ran to get their friends. They brought some girls too, for good measure, and the story neared completion with thirty or forty of the mountain children for audience. Then, right there, the preacher started the Daily Vacation Bible School, which was what he had come to do. In the midst of one of the story periods he mentioned, "the reason for Christmas time, you know."

"Say, mister," Freckles, having discovered this fascinating stranger, felt free enough to interrupt, "What is Chrissmus time, anyhow?"

The preacher was surprised and said so. "You tell him, Red, why we have Christmas."

"Don't know nothin' about it, mister."

Then the preacher grew more solemn. "Which of you can tell?" He waited a long time, and then, his voice very tender, he elicited the fact that not one of the youngsters knew why we celebrate Christmas. And so, on the hot summer day, he told them, for the first time, the story of the star in the East and the angel choir above Bethlehem.

Of course, it was a very successful Daily Vacation Bible School, and when it was over all those children knew the meaning, in all its fullness and glory, of what Freckles called "Chrissmus time."

In the Christmas Spirit. I thank thee, O God, that in the long ago the Christ was born. Wilt thou grant that he may also be born in my heart in the here and now?

I thank thee for this priceless Gift. In growing service to my fellows may I help to make thy Gift effective.

I thank thee for all the changes that have come in human life because of him. Grant that I may so catch his spirit and purpose that I may help to carry on his great enterprise of Kingdom building.

In the Christmas spirit. Amen.—P. R. Hayward.

LESSON XIII—DECEMBER 27

REVIEW: THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY IN EUROPE

GOLDEN TEXT: The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. Revelation 11.15

DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 11.1-10

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

O breath of God! O my delight
In many a vigil of the night!
Like the great voice in Patmos heard
By John, the Evangelist of the Word,
I hear thee behind me saying: Write.—Longfellow.

Is there any Henceforth in our lives, any vital sense of a life to come, any far horizon visible beyond the narrowness and limitations of the daily road we tread?—W. J. Dawson.

Tell the event to which each of the following refers:—

There have been men like those Jews in every age and every land who have delighted in stirring up others—no community is free from them.

"In the boundless supply of divine grace lies power to turn the world upside down, if only the people of God would receive and transmit what he is so willing to bestow!"

"There stood a man of Belgium saying, 'Come over and help us,' and immediately men of Britain arose to answer the call."

We have no right to suppose that another has done a wrong thing and then state our supposition as a fact. A large proportion of the miserable gossip which is retailed by idle people in drawing-rooms and other places is started just as the story about Paul started.—J. R. Miller.

"When came the Sabbath of worship and rest,
Out of the city, in reverent quest,
Down by the riverside faithful ones came,
Where prayer was wont to be made in his name."

So, like the saint at Corinth, well content
The craftsman's task we ply,
If, with the weaving, rise another tent
Eternal in the sky.—John Elliott Bowman.

Every day gives us courage and hope and some song of rejoicing. Though the prison be closed around us and the guards be set over us, may we sing songs in the night.—Beecher.

How he, who lone in Patmos banished
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand.—Burns.

"Of Tarsus it is written with authority that once it was no mean city, but that is a tale of long ago."

QUESTIONS UPON THE QUARTER'S LESSONS

For Young People and Adults.

1. Where did Paul first preach in Europe? Why did he go there?
2. Where was Paul accused of turning the world upside down, and in what sense was the accusation true?
3. Where did Paul spend a longer time than in any other city, and what happened there?
4. Mention six noteworthy places visited by Paul on his second and third missionary journeys, and state briefly what happened in each.
5. What connection with the life and work of Paul did each of the following men have: Felix, John Mark, Timothy, Silas, Luke, Philemon?
6. What are the main episodes of his life which Paul would recall in the loneliness of his prison at Rome?
7. What does the world owe to Paul?

8. From which of Paul's Epistles have we had texts, and what lessons have we learned from them?
9. What is the condition today regarding the Eighteenth Amendment?
10. People assume one of three attitudes toward missions—helpfulness, indifference, opposition: which is yours?

For Intermediates and Seniors.

1. With what event does the story of the life of Paul begin? With what event does it close?
2. Who were Aquila and Priscilla? Who was Titus Justus?
3. Who was Lydia? Timothy? Silas? Jason?
4. Locate Troas and tell what happened there.
5. Locate Philippi and tell what happened there.
6. Locate Thessalonica and tell what happened there.
7. Locate Corinth and tell what happened there.
8. Locate Ephesus and tell what happened there.
9. For what were the Bereans noted?
10. What is the greatest lesson that you have learned from the life of Paul?
11. What quality in Paul do you most admire? Tell how he showed it.
12. What are good reasons for total abstinence from spirituous liquors?

QUESTIONS ON THE ACTS

1. With what event does the book begin? 2. With what does it close? 3. How many years does its history cover? 4. What city was the scene of the first seven chapters? 5. Who was the leader? 6. Where is the scene of chapters 8-12? 7. Who were the leaders? 8. To what Gentiles was the gospel preached? 9. In what countries did the events of the last sixteen chapters take place? 10. Who was the leader? 11. To whom was the gospel preached? 12. Who wrote The Acts? 13. What do we know about him? 14. How did he know about the history which he records? 15. When was he with Paul? 16. What was the purpose of The Acts? 17. What is its character?

WRITTEN WORK

For Young People and Adults.

1. The Evil of Superstition.
2. An Appreciation of Paul.
3. A reporter's account for the Baptist Herald at Philippi of a visit to a religious gathering.
4. The report made by the Society for the Protection of Roman Rights by one of its agents concerning the treatment of Paul in Philippi.
5. An account in the Herald of Thessalonica concerning a recent riot.
6. Philemon's Answer to Paul's Letter.

For Intermediates and Seniors.

1. How Christianity Came to Europe.
2. A Great Bonfire.
3. From the Arrest at Jerusalem to Rome.
4. Paul the Dauntless.
5. A Beautiful Letter.

A REVIEW CONTEST

Let two classes unite for this review, each with a leader. Let the teacher of Class A ask the questions, and the leader of Class B keep the record. Class A is asked the first question, and all who think they can answer hold up their hands. The leader of Class A decides who shall answer. The leader of Class B then writes a credit or a debit mark for Class A. If the answer is wrong, the question is then given to Class B. The second question is given first to Class B, and the third to Class A, and so on. Questions should all be such as can be answered in a few words.

Note. If you wish, you can obtain through the Surplus Department of the World's Sunday School Association the address of a missionary or teacher in the Philippines or in Korea where these lessons will be studied next year, who will be glad to receive this book. The address is given on page 259.

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